



BULLETIN OF THE POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



Gross-Born "Husarz" Blok 6 – See Gems of Polish Philately on Page 7

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Membership: Members participate in all the services and activities offered by the Society, including complete access to the Society website (www.polonus.org) and the option of receiving a quarterly bulletin in print or electronically. The two membership categories are: **Regular and Junior**. Annual dues for **Regular Members** opting to receive **Printed Bulletin (via mail)** are: **North America - \$30 / Outside N.A. - \$40** or **Electronic Bulletin (via website)** are: **North America - \$25 / Outside N.A. - \$25**. Annual dues for **Junior Members** (under age 16 and electronic bulletin only) are: \$10. Annual dues are payable in US funds no later than the end of March of each calendar year. Dues for new members are pro-rated for the time of the year application is submitted, i.e., for period **Jan – Mar 100%** of annual dues; **Apr – Jun 75%**; **Jul – Sep 50%**; and **Oct – Dec 125%** (to cover full payment for following year).

Dues and Changes of Address to be sent to: Polonus Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 489, Maryville, IL 62062.

Articles for publication to be sent to: Chairman of Publication Committee.

Membership queries to be sent to: Membership Chairman.

General Society matters and complaints to be sent to: President.

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Other Ads: Full page or insert ads for single copy available. Send e-mail with ad copy to: info@polonus.org for pricing.

Message from the President

By: Bob Ogrodnik

In times like these I find an escape to my hobby of stamp collecting a very comforting diversion from the tensions of the day, like the recent “debt default” crisis and “market correction”. Hopefully, these tensions have not cast a pall on your summer and this issue will provide you with a comforting diversion by contributing to your knowledge and enjoyment of Polish philately.

On page 4 of this issue, please read my article on “Volunteers – Key to Society Future” and respond by completing the enclosed survey. Our goal is to expand the volunteer base with members who are able and willing to contribute their time and talent towards the activities and programs that represent the benefits of membership in our Society. By taking an active part as a volunteer, you will not only help in sharing the workload but you will also have the opportunity to increase your knowledge and enrich your enjoyment in Polish philately.

Our appeal for annual contributions during the 2011 dues renewal process has been successful. Over 40% of our membership has responded with payment in excess of their dues. A listing of 2011 Polonus Donors is included in this issue and letters will be mailed to the respective members acknowledging their tax-deductible contribution.

Approximately 30% of our members have opted to receive their Bulletin via our website. This is a good start and we are confident that many more members will feel comfortable with and see the benefits of receiving the “electronic” version of the Bulletin in the future. In order to encourage members to regularly visit the Polonus website (www.polonus.org) we have initiated a column in this issue titled, “What’s New on the Web”. We have expanded the coverage of Dr. Kronenberg’s collection and added several uploads of award-winning exhibits. This material is only available on the Polonus website and provides an invaluable reference to all levels of collectors. Be sure to check this out.

Sam Ginsburg’s article on Polonus PURLS provides members with website sources for Maps of Poland. This column has become a valuable reference for those involved with philatelic research.

This issue also contains some first-time documentation of discoveries in Polish philately. The “Gems of Polish Philately” article on the “Husarz” Karnet by Hank Bieniecki provides an answer to a key question regarding the elusive issue of the Gross-Born Blok 6. The example illustrated in this article is among the rarest of the Camp Mail emissions.

Robert Puchala’s article on the “1919 Cracow Postage Due Issue – 15/36 Hal. with Form IIC Overprint” documents the history and the circumstances involved in the issuance of this rare Cracow variety.

If you were not aware of the 1944 Olympics at Oflag IID, be sure to read Roman Sobus’ article in which he explains his discovery of a schedule for opening ceremonies of this camp competition. This issue includes the third in a three-part series of articles by Jim DeLine on Groszy Overprints. The article describes a study of 185 commercial covers in verifying the domestic postal rates in Poland during the Groszy Overprint era, a time of rapid inflation and currency devaluation.

With a focus on WW II history, Jan Niebrzydowski’s article on the “1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade” provides an insight into the role played by this Polish unit during the Battle of Arnhem in Holland. Included with this article are examples of correspondence between members of this Brigade and Mrs. Stefania Bardzilowska, the prolific correspondent with Polish forces during WW II. For “Słania” collectors, we have an interesting article by John Campbell based upon his personal meeting with Czesław Słania. This article also introduces a book authored by John Campbell, illustrating his collection of stamps and banknotes engraved by Słania. Information on how to purchase this book is provided.

It is time to start thinking and planning for our 10th Annual Meeting & Exhibition on 16-18 March 2012. We will be a “Convening Society” of the Saint Louis Stamp Expo to be held at the Renaissance Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. A call for exhibitors will be sent out soon and the next bulletin issue (#545 in December), as well as our website, will have the details regarding this annual event. Stay tuned and plan to “Meet me in St. Louis”.

Volunteers – Key to Society Future

By: Bob Ogrodnik

Allow me to begin this article by thanking all members who volunteer their time and talent towards sharing the workload at Polonus for the common good. Your willingness to spend a relatively small amount of time on your respective assignments has meant a great deal to the success of programs and benefits that we have been able to deliver to our membership. However, our ability to sustain and improve our Society will be determined by the ongoing commitment of members to serve in some volunteer capacity. In short, we need more volunteers.

Included with this issue is a “survey” to help us find members who are interested in and willing to consider volunteering. You will note that this short survey is asking for a response to **I. Skill Set** and **II. Volunteer Opportunities**. Take a moment to look this over, fill it out, and send us your reply as soon as possible. As a global organization we rely upon electronic communication. Hence, access to and a general knowledge of computers is a prerequisite. At this time our priority needs are defined in **II. Volunteer Opportunities**. A brief description of the assignment or task is included under each of the four opportunities listed. More information will be provided to any member indicating an interest, prior to a final decision on the assignment. Also, Polonus will provide any material required for completing an assignment (such as, envelopes, labels, postage, etc.), so that the volunteer does not have any out-of-pocket expense related with the assignment. As more volunteer opportunities surface, we will post these in future issues of the Bulletin and include the same on our Website.

A side benefit to members who volunteer is the opportunity to increase their knowledge of Polish philately and to derive more enjoyment from the hobby of stamp collecting. Based upon my personal experience, I can assure you of an enriching experience. As a Polonus member since 1984, I must admit that I had been pretty passive for the first 20 years, simply paying my dues, skimming the Bulletins, occasionally attending POLPEX events in Chicago, and being content at filling empty spaces in my Poland albums. However, while attending a Polonus Annual Member-

ship Meeting in 2005 (St. Louis) I agreed to support the transition from a “club” to a “virtually global” organization by volunteering for a project and agreeing to serve on the Board of Directors. The next steps were Membership Chairman, Vice President and now Chairman of the Publication Committee and President. Over that time and through my volunteering I learned there was more to Polish philately than filling my albums. Through interaction with other volunteers, who possessed a great amount of knowledge and experience, I developed a greater appreciation and knowledge the varied Poland collecting interests and became an exhibitor. This experience has been an unending source of enjoyment.

I mention this because I feel many of members may be in similar situations as I had been in prior to accepting my first volunteer assignment.

I look forward to receiving your response to the enclosed “survey” and to your interest in joining the team of Polonus Volunteers. For members receiving the electronic version of Bulletin, the survey form is available as #544 Supplement

Przedbórz Website Award

Polonus has received a donation from Sam Ginsburg in honor of long-time Polonus member Roman Harmel and his friends, Zdzisław and Marek Porawski of Lubań, Poland. They have been awarded the 4th Occasional Przedbórz Website Award, a donation in their honor and in appreciation for providing information or suggestions for improving knowledge of Przedbórz philately or the www.prz.ginsburgs.org website. The winners provided copies of documents from the 1920's and 1930's that Sam had been trying to find for at least six years. Previous winners have been Polonus member Hank Bieniecki; Rossica members Gary Combs, Leon Finik, John Lechtanski, Jeff Radcliffe and David Skipton; and Austrian (British) Philatelic Society member Andy Taylor.

What's New on the Web

If you are not yet a frequent visitor to the Polonus website, www.polonus.org, this new column will encourage you to make the Polonus website your "first-stop" for Polish philately.

Since April 2011, we have added three volumes of the Dr. Kronenberg collection featuring many never before publicly displayed items. There is something of interest for everyone, including the most sophisticated collectors.

In the "Exhibits" section, new uploads include the following award-winning exhibits: Wiesław Kostka's "Reissue of the 1945 Hero Issue Bearing New Value and Colors"; Jay Carrigan's "Polish DP Camps in Germany – The Lubeck Complex"; Andrew Uru-shima's "The 1944 POW Olympics: Gross Born and Woldenberg"; and Chris Kulpinski's "Soviet Occupation of Poland – 1939/1941". In total, new additions to the "Dr. Kronenberg Collection" and "Exhibits" sections of the Polonus website represents over 400 pages of outstanding Polish philatelic material, all re-

searched and documented for your viewing pleasure and for your reference in organizing your own exhibit. Most of these pages are not available anywhere else!

The "Useful Links" section has also been expanded. We continue to add relevant websites for your use as additional resources and for your convenience. We want the Polonus website to be your "first-stop" for Polish philately.

Another reason to perhaps consider switching to our electronic Bulletin program, besides lower membership dues and reduced cost to the Society, is to have access to supplemental pages relating to Bulletin articles. We limit the Bulletin to 20 – 24 pages per issue in the traditional format due to mailing costs. Electronic format does not have this limitation. Therefore, additional information related to articles and web only based articles will be available as Bulletin supplements in the "Polonus Bulletins" section. An example of this is the supplement for Bulletin #543. Visit www.polonus.org today and check-out "What's New on the Web".

2011 Polonus Donors

Polonus Philatelic Society gratefully acknowledges the following members who have generously made a donation during the year. A letter acknowledging the tax-deductible gift will be sent to each donor.

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Polonus PURLS - Maps of Poland

By: Sam Ginsburg

This column may provide you with a few helpful website sources if you are looking for maps of Polish cities, towns, etc., for a particular time period. Some of these sites are in Polish, but if you have Google Toolbar installed, it may provide usable English translations. The sites are not in any special order because I don't have any particular way of organizing them.

Historyczne mapy Polski (<http://polmap.republika.pl/>) has a fabulous set of historical atlases, all to the same scale. It appears to start with the first immigrations of the Slavs from farther east, and has a nice way of using the Flash player to fade from one map to the next when you click the button. For example, it traces the early migrations into the area. It has a 7-minute video of maps tracing Polish boundaries from about 960 A.D. to the present, a chronology of events throughout Polish history, and a list of rulers. Thanks to Tom Malicki and Bob Ogrodnik for independently suggesting this site.

Among Tom's other map suggestions are

- 1) <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~polwgv/maps.html>, the PolishGen section on maps, has a large annotated list of links to modern and old maps plus some for purchase.
- 2) <http://katalog.onet.pl/6934,mapy-historyczne,k.html>, the onet.pl section on maps, also has an extensive list of maps. The site is in Polish but translates well with Google Toolbar.

One link from this website is to <http://english.mapywig.org/news.php>, the online Map Archive of Wojskowy Instytut Geograficzny (WIG), which frequently adds new scans to the website. It has hundreds of scans from a variety of sources – Russian, German, Brigham Young, etc., in scales ranging from 1:750,000 down to 1:25,000. There are old city maps for perhaps 80 cities, and a list of abbreviations commonly found on Polish maps. There are good indices for some of the 1:100,000 and 1:300,000 maps. Unfortunately, I couldn't find a usable index for the many other maps.

The Polish Genealogical Society of America's (PSGA) section of maps, <http://pgsa.org/geomaps.php>, includes cross-references of Polish-German town names, as well as a ever-expanding set of English translations of town listings from Słownik Geograficzny

Królestwa Polskiego, the 16-volume Polish Geographical Dictionary, written in the late 1800's, and available (in Polish) on CD from the PSGA store. And, of course, there are many scans of maps.

The 3rd Military Mapping Survey of Austria-Hungary, <http://lazarus.elte.hu/hun/digkonyv/topo/3felmeres.htm>, has about 267 maps of Central Europe, as far north as Szczecin. The ones I looked at were dated 1890 to 1910. The scale is 1:200,000. The most fascinating aspect of these maps is that they are based on the Ferro Meridian, 20° west of the Paris Meridian, which in turn is 2° 20' 14.025" east of the almost universal Greenwich Meridian. Read more about meridians in Wikipedia.

It's interesting to browse the eBay store of seller Euriskodata, who puts all sorts of public-domain material on CD. Their list may change if they run out of a particular CD and don't make new ones right away. But when I checked recently, they had CDs with Polish maps and Russian maps.

Info-Poland (<http://info-poland.buffalo.edu/>, reviewed in Bulletin #543) also has a variety of links, under Poland on the web > geography > maps and geography > mapserver. But other Info-Poland pages also have map links. Searching for maps on this website (some pages have a slightly different name) resulted in over 250 matches, including some listed above.

Other listings: a web search for maps of Poland, or Polish maps will uncover many more options. Google Earth can show you pictures of any place in Poland, sometimes even individual buildings. Google Maps now covers streets in many (perhaps all) towns and cities.

This column discusses some issues, tips, and sites to help with maps of Poland. Please send your favorites as well as corrections, additions, and other suggestions to me at samgins1730@yahoo.com.

Polonus Members Featured in the 2011 Congress Book

Dr. Jerzy Kupiec-Weglinski and Jacek Kosmala have been honored by the 77th American Philatelic Congress by having their collaborative paper, "The Development of Airmail Services in Poland (1918 – 1923)", published in the 2011 Congress Book.

Gems of Polish Philately - Husarz Karnet

Gross-Born “Husarz” Karnet – Mystery Resolved?

By: Hank Bieniecki

Fischer Vol II and prior Polish catalogs typically refer to the elusive “Husarz” Blok 6 (See Cover), produced by the Polish Camp Post at Gross-Born II D on 15 VIII 1944, as being issued with or as part of a karnet. The term karnet generally refers to a folder in which various philatelic emissions are mounted. Unfortunately, the reference material does not provide a detailed description of the Blok 6 karnet or the method of affixing Blok 6 in the karnet. The simplest method for obtaining answers to questions about a philatelic emission is by direct observation of multiple examples of that issue. In the case of the “Husarz” issue, this was complicated by its rarity plus other factors discussed herein, which created additional questions.

Over the course of time, I had the opportunity to examine a couple of examples of Blok 6 in the collections of others (including Dr. Kronenberg), as well as acquiring a few examples for clients. Every Blok 6 that I examined was a single sheet of cream colored, smooth, medium thick paper measuring 148 x 105 mm, as illustrated on the cover. (Original paper stock color was listed as white. The color change resulted from the nature of the paper and time.) Each sheet was imprinted with two rouletted examples of the “Husarz” issue (Fi# II D 16) positioned 40 mm apart. A DZIEN (Day) 4 version of the circular date stamp (day was changeable), created for the Camp Philatelic Exhibition held from 12 to 15 August 1944, was imprinted between the two rouletted stamps. The only variable noted in the examples I examined were several instances of varying degrees of damage to the corners of the Blok 6. In one case the Blok 6 had obviously been trimmed down from its original size, presumably to remove its damaged corners. Anecdotal data obtained from various sources indicated it was not uncommon to find corner damage on Blok 6. It was presumed to have resulted from Blok 6 initially being affixed with aggressive glue in a karnet and subsequently being removed by collectors. None of the examples I examined provided any direct evidence as to the nature of karnet. Sources in Poland confirmed that the value listed in Fischer

for a Blok 6 was the price for a full sized Blok without significant corner damage. They indicated that a Blok 6 with its karnet in very fine condition would have a significantly higher value.

Recently, I obtained a complete “Husarz” Blok 6 with karnet and was finally able to resolve my basic question about this issue. **Figure 1** illustrates the outside page of an intact “Husarz” karnet. The outside page was utilized as a cover for addressing the “Husarz” karnet to Zbigniew Włodarski, Battalion IV, Company 7, Druz II, who served as the technical director of production in the Camp Post. The cover page bears the official return address of the Camp Post, a camp registration hand-stamp, and the circular date stamp of the Camp Post dated 15 VIII 1944. As this item was official mail sent by the Camp Post, no postage was required. **Figure 2** is a photograph of Captain Włodarski in uniform.

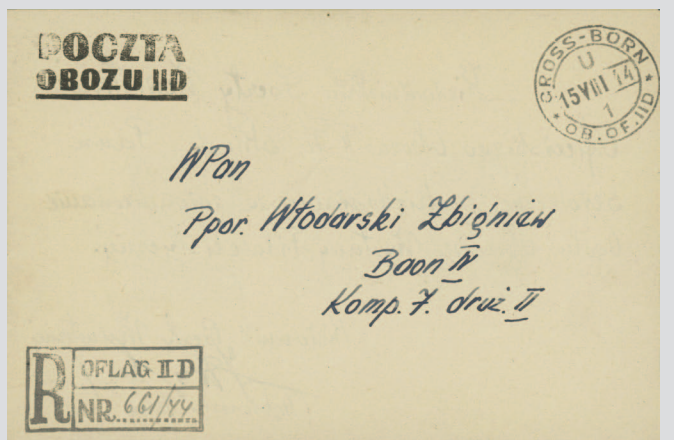


Figure 1 – Cover of “Husarz” karnet sent via Camp Post



Figure 2 – Photo of Zbigniew Włodarski included in his limited edition catalog published in 1951 in Great Britain (four typed copies with manually inserted photographic illustrations). This early catalog documented the emissions of Gross-Born, Neubrandenburg, and Lubecka Camp Posts based on the data of the official Camp Protocols.

Gems of Polish Philately - Husarz Karnet (Cont.)

Figure 3 illustrates the two inside pages of the karnet, which clearly answers my basic question about this issue. We now know that the karnet was produced from a single sheet of paper approximately 296 mm x 105 mm which was simply folded in half. As indicated above the outside page was used as a mailing cover. The front inside was used for a dedication page and reads "The Directorate of the Internal Camp Post of Officers Camp IID extends its heartfelt thanks for organizing the Intra-Camp Post Philatelic Exhibition. (signed) Director of the Internal Camp Post, Jerzy Dąbrowski." (Examples of the cover and dedication page were illustrated separately in Włodarski's 1951 Catalog and other reference resources. They were not described as being parts of the karnet. Predicated on the intact copy illustrated in this article and prior illustrations we may now surmise that the dedication text was identical in each karnet.) The eureka moment is the discovery that the "Husarz" Blok 6 was printed directly on the back inside page of the karnet. I have not illustrated the outside back page. It functioned as the back of Blok 6 and is blank.

Fischer and various other reference works confirm that only 38 "Husarz" karnets were produced. According to various references they were all sent via Camp Post to those persons who were instrumental in preparing for and conducting the Camp Philatelic Exhibition. Given a total printing of only 38 copies, the "Husarz" Blok 6 is the rarest of any POW Camp emission with a primary catalog number. Intact examples of the "Husarz" karnet are "Gems of Polish Philately."

References in the literature to Blok 6 as being produced with a karnet generated questions that could not be definitively answered without access to an intact copy, given that the philatelic issue was typically not an integral part of the karnet. However, in retrospect there is probably no better philatelic term to describe this fascinating issue. At this point no one is definitely able to answer why over the years collectors elected to separate the Blok 6 from its cover and dedication page. It certainly would have been simple enough to fold the karnet over and display it intact with Blok 6 facing out. To put this apparent "philatelic vandalism" in context we need to remember that over the decades there have been huge changes in customarily accepted standards for "proper" philately. What is now considered to be an intact Gem was apparently viewed differently by past generations of collectors who, in their quest for stamps to put in their albums, destroyed vast quantities of postal history. One key question has been answered, but others remain. Why do some examples of Blok 6 have glue damage to their corners? Why have some examples been cut down, presumably to remove corner damage? Is it possible that some part of the 38 "Husarz" karnets were issued in another format where Blok 6 was glued into/onto another type of karnet? Readers with additional information about this issue are requested to email me at info@biistamp.com.

Author's Note: Gross-Born Bloks 3, 4, & 5 were sold during the Camp Philatelic Exhibition. Each of these Bloks was available with commemorative circular date stamp for each day of the exhibition. Like Blok 6, these Bloks were all produced from woodcuts that were also used to produce regular camp emissions.

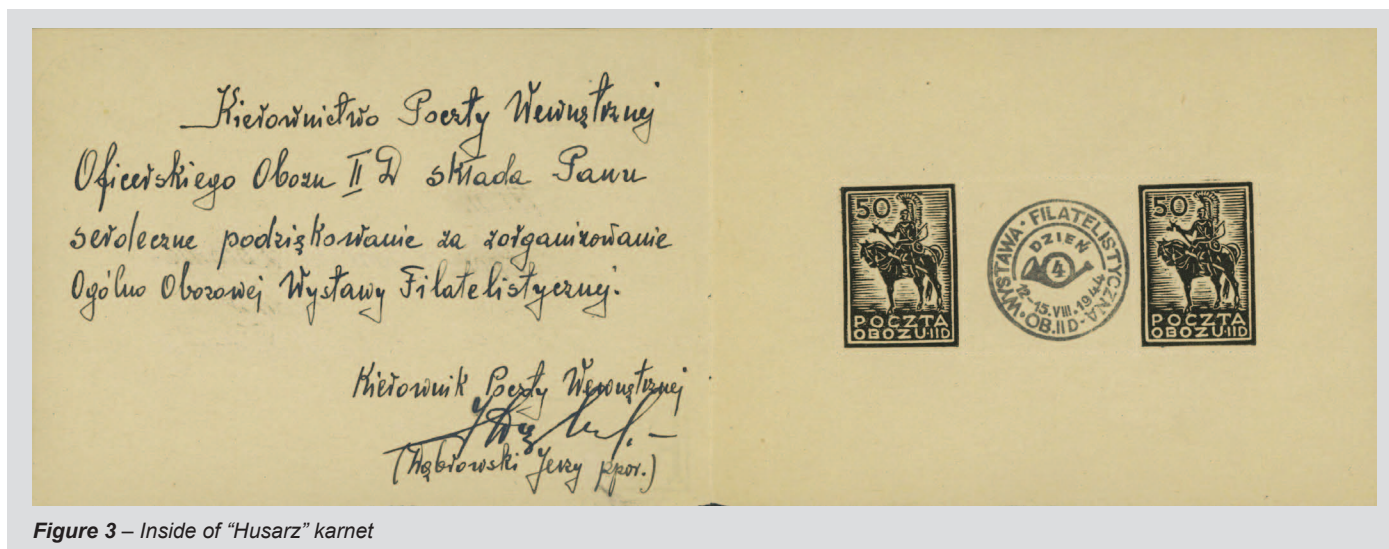


Figure 3 – Inside of "Husarz" karnet

1919 Cracow Postage Due Issue

- 15/36 Hal. w/ Form IIC Overprint

By: Robert Puchała

Editor's Note: The overprinting of Austrian postage stamps, started in January 1919 in Cracow, Poland by the Polish Post, for usage as provisional issues until the Post was able to produce its own emissions, created one of the most thoroughly studied and world famous issues of Poland. The quantities produced were relatively small. Demand for these Cracow overprints resulted in the contemporaneous production of numerous forgeries which in many cases may only be detected by the precise measurement of the typographic overprints used to produce the majority of these stamps. The proliferation of forgeries resulted in exhaustive studies of the genuine stamps over the intervening years which via deductive reasoning established the printing order of the Cracow issues.

For the purpose of this article the reader needs to grasp two basic concepts. The size of the Austrian stamps overprinted varied from 25 x 30 mm (majority of regular issues) to 25 x 25 mm (red postage dues). Given the variation in the size of the Austrian stamps the printers had to reset and resize the 100 overprints in the Typographic Overprint Form (TOF) to align properly with the 100 stamps in the sheet of the Austrian stamps to be overprinted. Form I TOF was the first form created and was used to overprint a majority of the Cracow issues (3h, 5h, 6h, 10h, 12h, 15h, 20h, 40h, 50h, 60h, 80h, 90h, 50/42h, 1k, and a few 10k). The printer then had to reduce the size of the TOF to create Form II so that POZCZTA POLSKA overprints aligned with the smaller 25 x 25 mm red postage due stamps. The following article documents an extremely rare variety that was produced and inadvertently survived as a result of the need to modify the TOF to adapt to changes in the size of the Austrian stamps selected for overprinting. Experts and collectors had anecdotal knowledge of the existence of this stamp but until recently there were no known examples. We are grateful to Polonus member Robert Puchała for the following article which for the first time documents this illusive Cracow variety.

Form II was prepared in Cracow by Koziński Printing Shop to produce a TOF for use on 25 x 25 mm stamps, including most postage due and all newspaper stamps. In his monograph [1] on this issue, Professor Stanisław Mikstein identified five variations of the Form II TOF and, based on the knowledge available at the time, gave them designations according to the overprint sequence: IIA, IIB, IIC, IID, and IIE. Each of these sub-forms, although based on the original form II type set, was subsequently reconstructed and adapted to the varying sizes of stamps and sheets in the order in which they were delivered for overprinting.

During late 1950's, a well known collector and researcher of this issue, Ing. A. Taipalle of Sweden, proved that form IIC overprint predated form IIB. He described this in a research article in "Filatelista" [2] and displayed it in his research collection at "Polska 60" Worldwide Philatelic Exhibition in Warsaw.

Form IIC was used to overprint newspaper stamps following the use of form IIA to overprint postage due stamps. Although two form designations were applied (IIA and IIC), both forms were exactly the same type set. After overprinting postage due stamps with form IIA (approximately 350 sheets @ 100 stamps per sheet), it is presumed that the TOF was cleaned before overprinting the newspaper stamps. As a consequence of the cleaning, some of the type in the TOF was loosened, resulting in small but detectable errors. While form IIA overprints display a high degree of dimensional consistency, the overprints designated as form IIC have shown large variations, especially in relative horizontal positions. In addition, the newspaper stamps were overprinted using an ink with a different viscosity than the ink used for the postage due stamps. Although the TOF was not actually reconstructed, as had been originally assumed in assigning it a new designation as form IIC, the loose type and change in ink viscosity justify the differentiation between forms IIA and IIC.

When the overprinting of the newspaper stamps with form IIC was completed (nearly 2000 sheets @ 100 stamps per sheet), approximately 80 sheets of larger 25 x 30 mm Austrian stamps were found in the printing shop. This size stamp had been originally overprinted using form I. Unfortunately the form I TOF had already been disassembled and no longer existed. Therefore, the printer had to convert form IIC by increasing the space between "POCZTA" and "POLSKA" in order to align the overprints with the larger stamps.

As this article will document, the printer first attempted to use the unconverted form IIC to overprint one sheet of 15/36 hal. postage stamps. Apparently the overprint was intentionally positioned low on the first row of the sheet, in order to overprint as large a portion of the sheet as possible. A reconstructed view of the overprint is shown in **Figure 1**.

In addition to the intended low position on the first row, the TOF was also positioned too close to the left edge and was slightly skewed. The resulting overprint was not satisfactory. Only six rows received a single overprint and, due to the excessive shift to the

1919 Cracow Postage Due Issue

- 15/36 Hal. w/ Form IIC Overprint (Cont.)

POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA
POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA
POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA
POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA
POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA
POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA
POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA
POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA
POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA
POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA	POCZTA POLSKA

Figure 1 – Reconstructed view of 15/36 hal. overprinted sheet using form IIC

left and the skew, nearly all stamps on the right side of these rows had their overprint overlapping across the left edge. On three rows the proper overprint, albeit badly shifted, was accompanied by a portion of the overprint from the row below. As the TOF was too short the bottom row did not have any overprint.

According to the account of J. Machowski [3] the printer applied an additional overprint on the bottom row of this sheet. As a result, this sheet of 100 stamps had eleven rows of overprints rather than ten. I do not know what the 11th row overprint looked like, so I have omitted it in my reconstruction. The hypothesis that this was the last overprint using form IIC is confirmed by the error in the letter “A” in “POLSKA” in position 29 of the sheet, which is typical for the final overprints made with this form. The error is notice-

able on the reconstructed sheet in **Figure 1**.

It is believed that this attempt to use the unconverted form II C was so unacceptable that the printer did not report it, but he did include this sheet with the others that were correctly overprinted using form IIB to align with the larger 25 x 30 mm stamps. In total, seven sheets of the 15/36 hal. overprint were delivered to the post office at Gorlice, consisting of the faulty sheet described above using form IIC and six using form IIB.

Figure 2 shows the stamp in position 50 of the sheet. Note the large portion of the position 50 overprint in the upper part of the stamp and a portion of position 60 overprint at the bottom of the stamp.



Figure 2 – Position 50 of the 15/36 hal. overprint stamp

Figure 3 shows another stamp, position 89 in the sheet, with a major portion the overprint on the left side of the stamp and the letters “PP” of position 90 overprint on the right side of the stamp.

For comparison,

Figure 4 shows a pair of stamps with form IIB overprint in positions 7-8 and correct for this face value. You will note the left stamp (position 7) has an error

1919 Cracow Postage Due Issue

- 15/36 Hal. w/ Form IIC Overprint (Cont.)



Figure 3 – Position 89 of the 15/36 hal. overprint stamp

in the letters “CZT” in “POCZTA”. Only six stamps were overprinted with this error and only two are known to exist today: the mint stamp shown here and a cancelled stamp on a cover.

Subsequent to its delivery to the post office in Gorlice the

15/36 postage due sheet bearing 110 form II C overprints began an interesting journey, according to the account provided by J. Machowski [3]. At the post office in Gorlice, which had received all the stamps of this face value, the complete sheet was purchased by Jan Chomętowski, a collector from Cracow. Since the overprint on the sheet looked unusual, or even suspicious, the lucky owner asked the post office at Gorlice to confirm its authenticity and to provide proof of purchase. A certificate dated 8 May 1919 was issued including the following statement:

“.....(the stamps) have come from the Ekonomat Pocztowy (superior mail authority) in Kraków. At the same time this Office expressed its surprise that anyone should question the authenticity of either the marks (stamps) or the overprint.”

In the same year the sheet was sold to the well known collector from Vienna, R. Taussing, who collected all Cracow stamps in complete sheets. After the death of R. Taussing and before WWII, the sheet was acquired by a great collector of this issue

(among others), Stanisław Adamski. The sheet was subsequently checked by Professor Stanisław Mikstein [4], who confirmed the authenticity of the form IIC overprint. Regarding the eleventh row overprint, he made the following unusual note:

“The last row of the 10 stamps has some overprints, the origin of which I have not established.”

Not knowing the full story of the sheet, Professor Mikstein assumed that the sheet may have been delivered privately to the printing shop for overprinting (which we now know was not true) and for this reason he did not check the sheet thoroughly, nor had he signed the stamps of this sheet. Subsequent to the breakup of the Stanisław Adamski collection in the 1960's, no further documentation of this sheet has surfaced.

Today, four items are known to exist. They appeared quietly in the philatelic market over the intervening years. I do hope that this article will encourage the discovery and documentation of more examples of this rarity.

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- [2] Taipale A., *Kolejność przeróbek II formy wyd. krakowskiego y 1919 r., Filatelista* 19/1959, p. 366-367.
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Figure 4 – Positions 7 & 8 of the 15/36 hal. overprint using form IIB

New Members

We welcome the following new members who recently joined our Society:

Miłosz Rządkosz - #1724
1 Coin Street, Apt. 1103
Toronto, Ontario
M8V 3Y9 Canada

Schedule of Opening Ceremonies - 1944 Olympics at Oflag IID

By: Roman Sobus

The saying, “you can’t judge a book by its cover”, does not only apply to books. In philately, however, the cover is usually the object of desire, and any contents are likely to have only secondary value. I did say usually, since on occasion, the contents are the prize, and the cover is of lesser interest.

One such item came to my attention through a fellow Polonus member who shares my interest in collecting internal camp mail. I received four scans of an item he had recently acquired for his sports theme collection. The first image I opened was of a plain letter, bulk mail, sent within the camp Oflag IID. I scrutinized the cover, which was not franked with a postage stamp, only a black stamp “Opłacono Ryczałtem”. The cover was a bit larger than the common mailing, about the size of a business envelope, but certainly nothing to get excited about. The date on the canceler “24.VII.44” was sharp and clear. This was usually reserved for official mail, but was often used by various clubs and organizations within the camp that mailed notices at discounted rates. The cover is addressed to: “Major Józef Skomra, Bat. 1, Bar 17/2” without a return address. **(Figure 1)**

The remaining three scans that I opened revealed

more labor intensive process was to make hand written transcripts or to individually type the documents. The carbon copy method was chosen in this case.

At first glance the three-page document appeared to be a list or schedule of sorts. There are handwritten changes throughout the document, with original typed text crossed out and corrections penciled in. As an example, the first item in the schedule is an outdoor Mass that has a handwritten notation changing it from “outdoors” to “Chapel”. **(Figure 2)** This indicates that the document was a working copy and specifics for the festivities were still evolving.

The final notations on the third page indicated copies were also sent to the five military sports clubs in the camp, Czarni, Polonia, Warta, Wilno, and Wisła. These were the clubs whose members took part in the Olympic athletic competition. Also copied were several captains, and the music and marching group directors. It is signed by Lt. Kaczmarek, Superintendent of the Olympic Organizing Commission. **(Figure 3)**

For those of our readers not familiar with the camp Olympics, several words of background information:

No formal Olympic games were held in 1940 and 1944 due to the ongoing war. There were however celebrations commemorating the 1944 Olympic year at two German Prisoner of War Camps, housing Polish Officers. Flags with the five ring symbol were flown over each camp, the Olympic torch was lit, athletes competed and awards were bestowed on all the participants.

The POW Olympics have been well documented. During the 2004 games, both NBC and the Cable station “Bravo” each aired a one hour documentary segment about the event. Information has also been published

in philatelic and non-philatelic literature [2,4,5]

pages of typewritten text. Not an original document, but a second or perhaps third generation carbon paper copies. For obvious reasons no mechanical reproduction of documents was permitted in prisoner of war camps. If multiple copies were required, carbon paper between sheets of paper was preferred. A

The fact that two separate camps held similar events at approximately the same time was not coincidental. Both Oflag IIC in Woldenberg and IID at Gross Born were situated in relative close proximity to one another. Priests, chaplains and social workers would

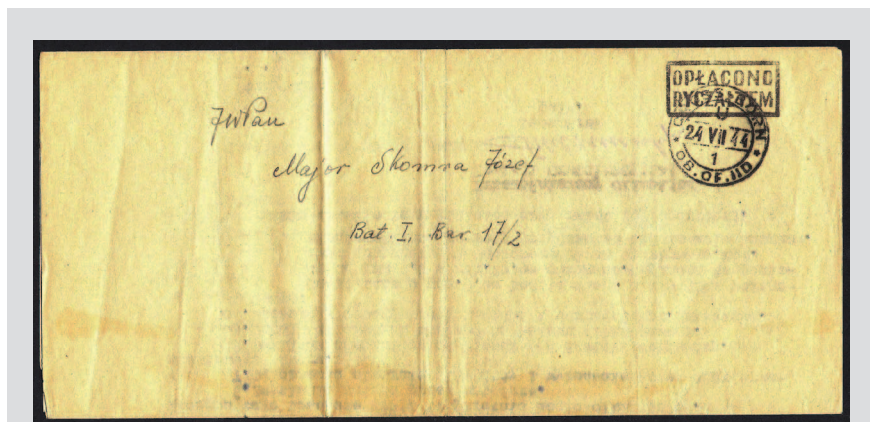
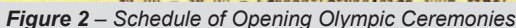


Figure 1 – Cover addressed to “Major Józef Skomra Bat. 1, Bar 17/2”

Schedule of Opening Ceremonies - 1944 Olympics at Oflag IID (Cont.)



both philatelic and traditional books and periodicals. The single red stamp depicting a runner crossing the finish-line is a recognizable, highly desirable and relatively inexpensive memento of the 1944 Olympic Games. (**Figure 4**)

An admission ticket and the formal program, which lists the schedule of both the opening ceremonies and the competition, are more difficult to acquire. Incorporated into the cover design of the program are three proposed stamp designs. The multicolored commemorative cachet postcards produced for the event are also a much sought-after item among collectors of the Olympics, sports memorabilia in general, and of course prisoner of war camps.



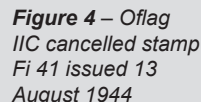
travel between the two, often carrying information and clandestine messages. That is the primary reason similar themes appear on many of the stamp issues of both camps.

The games at Woldenberg and the related commemorative ephemera have been well documented in

The Gross Born items tend to be more elusive even though three Olympic themed stamps (**Figure 5**) and a postal stationery card were prepared and were cancelled with special commemorative cancellers. A souvenir sheet utilizing the stamp designs in different colors was also prepared. A very rare uncanceled example is shown in **Figure 6**. At the completion of the games, participating athletes were awarded embossed paper medals (**Figure 7**).

While the Gross Born stamps, cards, and sheets surface at auction intermittently and the embossed medal less often, there is no evidence that an official program was produced for the event. Judging by the list of events appearing on these pages a great deal of planning went into preparations for the opening ceremonies. No doubt the schedule for the games themselves must have been equally precise. To my knowledge, this is the first time an article about this schedule is being published and, may very well be the only surviving example of this document.

To save Bulletin space,
reduced-scale images are
shown in this article. Please
write to me and I will provide
full size scans of the entire
document.



Thanks to Andrzej Szyman-
ski of Brampton, Ontario for
granting access to this won-
derful document and Adrian

Schedule of Opening Ceremonies - 1944 Olympics at Oflag IID (Cont.)



Figure 5 – Oflag IID sheetlets Fi 12ax, 13ax and 14ax issued 30 July 1944



Figure 6 – Oflag IID souvenir sheet Fi Blok 5 issued 14 August 1944



Figure 7 – Oflag IID 1944 Olympic medal

Wortman of Tauranga, New Zealand for the Gross Born philatelic images for this article. The remaining items are from the author's collection.

For a visual philatelic overview of the prisoner of war Olympic Games of 1944 please visit the Polonus web-site exhibit section and peruse member Andrew Urushima's award-winning one frame exhibit on the 1944 POW Olympic Games.

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Spring 1995

Groszy Overprints - Part III

By: Dr. James DeLine

Editor's Note: This is the third of a three-part series of articles on GROSZY overprints. Previous bulletins (#542 & 543) contained articles introducing the subject of GROSZY overprints and describing a study of 269 commercial covers. This article describes a study of 185 commercial covers in verifying the domestic postal rates in Poland during the GROSZY overprint era.

On October 28th, 1950, the Polish government announced a currency revaluation in which all currency was revalued at 1/100th of its former value and on the very next day, one "old złoty" became equal to one "new groszy". As the postal service did not have a supply of stamps denominated in the new currency, readily available stamps were used and overprinted with "GROSZY" in various types and colors. This was the start of the GROSZY overprint era, which lasted until April 15, 1951 when the post offices stopped overprinting old złoty stamps with "GROSZY", even though previously overprinted stamps were accepted until April 30, 1952. This was



◀ Figure 1

Figure 2 ▶



covered in my earlier articles. In this article, I will discuss postal rates for domestic mail and include several examples of covers with franking to verify the postal rates in effect.

Domestic Poland Postal Rates from 1 January 1950

Letters, local	up to 20 grams	10 zł
	>20 - 250 grams	15 zł
Letters, non-local	up to 20 grams	15 zł
	>20 - 250 grams	25 zł
Postal cards, local		10 zł
Postal cards, non-local		10 zł
Printed matter (Druk)	up to 20 grams	5 zł
Registered		Add 25 zł
Express		Add 50 zł

Table 1

Domestic Poland Postal Rates from 29 October 1950

Letters, local*	Up to 20 grams	30 gr
	>20 - 250 grams	45 gr
Letters, non-local	Up to 20 grams	60 gr (45 + 15 surcharge)
	>20 - 250 grams	90 gr (75 + 15 surcharge)
Postal cards, local*		30 gr
Postal cards, non-local		45 gr (30 + 15 surcharge)
Printed matter (Druk)	Up to 20 grams	30 gr (15 + 15 surcharge)
Registered*		Add 75 gr
Express*		Add 150 gr
Air Mail*		Add 15 gr

Table 2 - *Surcharge not applicable for local mail and special services

Prior to the currency revaluation, postal rates last adjusted on January 1, 1950 had been in effect. **Table 1** is a tabulation of domestic postal rates effective as of January 1, 1950.

In addition to the revaluation, the postal rates of the GROSZY overprint era were impacted by two other factors. The first was a mandatory surcharge of 5 zł that had been placed on domestic non-local mail for the benefit of the Fund for Rebuilding Warsaw. This surcharge became effective April 15, 1950 with the exception of domestic local mail that had been exempted from the surcharge. The second was a tripling of the postal rates coinciding with the revaluation of October 29, 1950. In addition to the increased postal rates, the surcharge continued but also tripled. **Table 2** is a tabulation of domestic postal rates effective October 29, 1950 reflecting the tripling of prior rates and including the surcharge on non-local mail.

A collection of commercial covers from the GROSZY overprint era was examined

Groszy Overprints - Part III (Cont.)

to study the relevant postal history of mail within Poland. I selected only covers in which both the sender's city and that of the recipient were clear. In this group of 185 covers, 121 or 65% were non-local



letters of less than 20 grams. Of these 121 covers, 117 were properly franked with stamps totaling 60 gr (**Figure 1**). Note, 60 gr stamps were not available at this time so all such covers had multiple stamps. This suggests that standard mail rates for letters between cities were well known promptly after currency revaluation. Of these 121 covers, 4 were franked with 90 gr, the rate required for letters weighing greater than 20 grams (**Figure 2**).

Registered non-local letters were also common and comprised 18, or 10% of the group under study. Of these 18 covers, 15 were correctly franked with 135 gr (**Figure 3**) and 2 were franked with 165 gr (**Figure 4**), the rate for letters >20 grams. Only one cover was incorrectly franked.

It appears that rates for local letters were not as well known as for non-local letters. Out of 24 letters mailed locally (within the city), 10 were correctly franked with 30 gr (**Figure 5**), 4 with 45 gr (correct for >20 grams) (**Figure 6**) and 10 were over-franked with the non-local rate (**Figure 7**).

There were 11 registered local letters, of which 9 were properly franked with 105 gr (**Figure 8**) while 2 were over-franked with the non-local registered rate of 135 gr (**Figure 9**).

There were 2 non-local express covers for which correct franking was 210gr. They were slightly under-franked with 195 gr (**Figure 10**) and 205 gr. There were 2 registered express covers correctly franked with 285gr (60gr letter rate + 75gr registered + 150gr express). (**Figure 11**)

Printed matter, labeled "DRUK", was represented by only three covers. Neither Fischer nor Polskie Znaki Pocztowe differentiate between local and non-local DRUK rates (in regards to the applicability of the 15 gr surcharge). Two of my DRUK covers are used locally and franked with 15 gr (**Figure 12**). This would be consistent with all other local mail exempt from the 15 gr surcharge. The other cover is a non-local but franked with only 15 gr. I suspect that this is an under-franked piece. I would appreciate hearing from readers with other examples of "DRUK" covers of the GROSZY overprint era.

Groszy Overprints - Part III (Cont.)



◀ Figure 8

Figure 9 ▶



◀ Figure 11

Figure 10 ▶



I have one example of a cover labeled “Faktura,” apparently having enclosed an invoice and franked with 20 gr (Figure 13). This category is not listed in the services available by postal rates during this period. I would also appreciate hearing from readers with other examples of “Faktura” covers or who can explain whether this is an under-franking of non-local mail.

The final category of covers included in my study are postal cards. Shown in Figure 14 is a non-local postal card franked with 45 gr, the correct amount that includes a 15 gr surcharge.

Foreign postal rates during the GROSZY overprint era were actually less than domestic rates due to the surcharge applied to non-local mail. The postal rate tables included in this article do not make reference to foreign postal rates, due to the complexity of routes and rates, especially with air mail service. Until now, we have not had a reference to Polish postal rates as with Marek Zbierski's *Polskie Taryfy Poczttowe 1918 – 1939*. However, I was just recently informed that a book by Adam Kielbasa-Schoeni and Stanisław Folta titled *Taryfy i Cennik Opłat Poczty Polskiej 1941 – 2010* will be released this year and I am looking forward obtaining a copy and using this reference in completing my study of foreign covers. I am hopeful that I can complete the study of GROSZY overprints on foreign covers and present my findings in a future issue of the *Polonus Bulletin*.

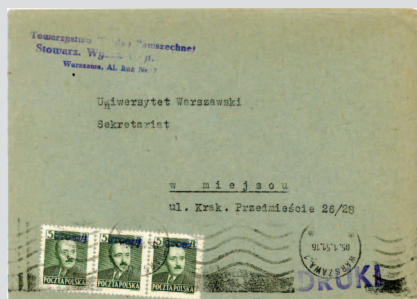


Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade

By: Jan Niebrzydowski

The 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade (**Figure 1**) was created by General Władysław Sikorski, Prime Minister of the Polish government in exile, by an order of 9 October 1941. It was an all-volunteer unit based in Leven, Scotland.



Figure 1 – 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade's sztandar (standard)

The command was given to Major General Stanisław Sosabowski, an experienced soldier who had distinguished himself during the defense of Warsaw and Mława against the German invasion of September 1939. It was the Polish government's intention that the Brigade should be used to

combat German forces on Polish territory and to help liberate Poland. Originally, it was the only Polish unit directly subordinate to the Polish government in exile and independent of the British command.

Training of high-class parachutists required three years. Recruits had to be in excellent health, courageous, able to withstand psychological pressure, able to find their way in any terrain, and trained to use a variety of weapons and a range of parachuting techniques. The training itself was a high-risk activity. There were several fatalities as a result of parachutes failing to open. In the worst such accident, which occurred on 8 July 1944, 26 parachutists lost their lives.

In 1944, the Brigade was comprised of 2200 soldiers in the following sections: parachute battalions, gunners, engineers, communications, military police, medical, and postal. Before the Warsaw Uprising began in August 1944, there was a Polish expectation that the Brigade would be used to provide support for the Polish Home Army, but this did not happen. Even before the Uprising started, the British High Command argued that it could not support it in any mean-

ingful way. Instead, it was decided that the Brigade should support the British 1st Airborne Division in Operation "Market Garden" at Arnhem in Holland. The objective was to seize bridges on the Rhine, take the surrounding towns and airport, and make the war six months shorter by taking the fight into the enemy's territory.

The operation was ill-conceived and was not a success. Major General Sosabowski had expressed strong reservations about it even before it was launched. On 21 September 1944, two of the Brigade's three battalions were deployed, amidst heavy German fire, in a new drop zone south of the Rhine near the village of Driel, opposite the 1st Airborne Division's position. Many parachutists were shot down while they were still in the air. They suffered further losses while attempting to cross the Rhine. Some 50 made it across on the first attempt and an additional 150 made the crossing on the second attempt, while the remainder of the Brigade held a defensive position in Driel. Those who succeeded in crossing the Rhine were able to cover the withdrawal of the remnants of the British 1st Airborne Division and the defensive position set-up in Driel forced a redeployment of German forces. The toll in Polish casualties was: 80 dead; 173 missing; and 158 wounded; for a total of 411. The British and American forces lost between 15 and 17 thousand, while German losses have been estimated at between 6 and 13 thousand. The Brigade was withdrawn on 26 September and, on 10 October, sent back to Britain. The British Command, led by Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, attributed most of the blame for the failed mission to Major General Sosabowski and removed him from his post.

In May 1945, the Brigade was sent to Germany. However, it was not involved in any further active

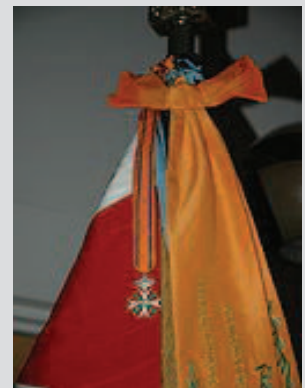


Figure 2 – Military Order of William awarded to the Brigade

1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade (Cont.)

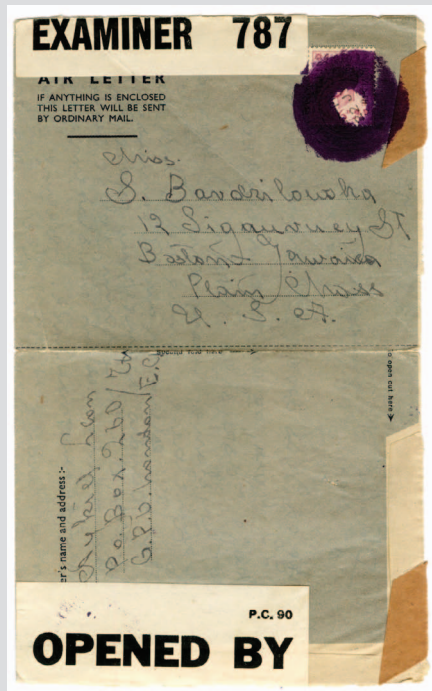


Figure 3 – Air mail letter dated 22 July 1943 sent by Leon Nykiel with a 6d stamp. It was cancelled with a dumb ink cancel. Censor's label "OPENED BY EXAMINER 787". Return address P.O. Box 260/76 London EC1.

bravery in this battle. The "Bronze Lion" is the second highest award of the Kingdom of Netherlands.

I have not come across any publications relating to correspondence from the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade. In my own collection I have only a few letters written to Mrs. Stefania Bardziłowska. Four of them are shown below. During the time that the Brigade was stationed in Great Britain, letters were cancelled with dumb ink cancels [1] known as "corks". The letters had been opened, censored and resealed with Censor's labels nos: 787, 1590, 1682, 2354, 2950, 4379, 5525 and 9164, as well as with one non-label ink cancel no. 12980. The return address was given as 260/76, London EC1. Letters sent while the Brigade was stationed in Germany had British stamps and were cancelled with British Field Post Office (FPO) cancel no. 209. These letters were not censored. Their return address was P.O. Box P/76 BAOR (British Army on the Rhine).

combat as by then the war was over. Up until 1947, the Brigade was assigned to duty in the British zone of occupation. After that, it was sent back to Britain and dissolved.

The Dutch authorities made no reference to the Polish contribution when they thanked and honored the soldiers of the allied countries. It was only when archival film documenting the Poles contribution in the Battle of Arnhem came to light some 60 years later that the Dutch recognized their valor. On 31 May 2006, the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade, whose traditions are kept alive by the Polish 6th Air Assault Brigade, was awarded the "Military Order of William" (Figure 2) for its distinguished and outstanding acts of bravery, skill and devotion to duty during Operation Market Garden.

This is the highest and rarest honor of the Kingdom of Netherlands. On the same date, Major General Sosabowski was posthumously awarded the "Bronze Lion" for his

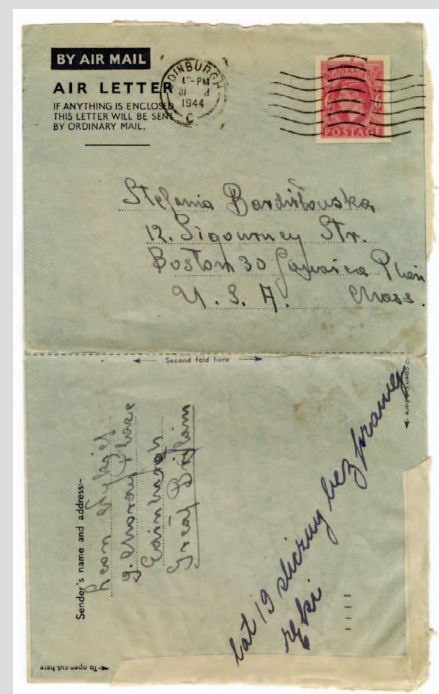


Figure 4 – Air mail letter dated 31 March 1944 with a 6d stamp also from Mr. Nykiel. It has a civilian cancellation from Edinburgh and is uncensored. Nykiel suffered an accident during a military training course, became disabled, and was transferred to a civilian school run by the Polish government in London. On this letter, Mrs. Bardziłowska wrote "19 years old. Handsome young man. Lost his right hand."

1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade (Cont.)

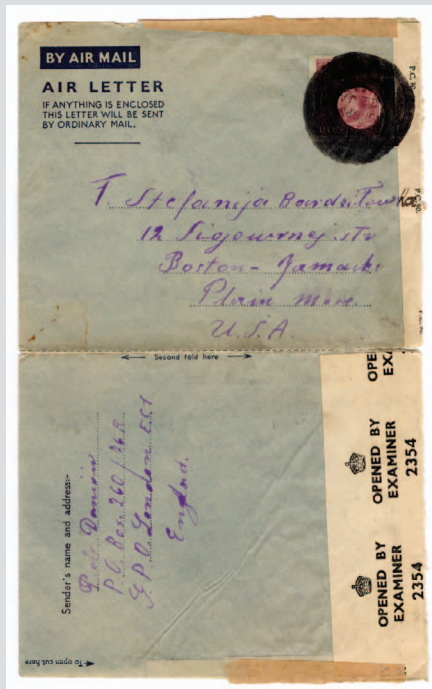


Figure 5 – Air mail letter dated 21 January 1944 with 6d stamp sent by Piotr Daniow. Dumb ink cancel. Censor's label no. 2354. P.O. Box 260/76 London EC1. He wrote to say that he had broken his arm during training and had it in a cast for several months.



Figure 6 – Recorded air mail letter sent during the Allied occupation of Germany by Jan Krzysztanek with British stamps to the value of 1/9d, cancelled at FPO 209 on 20 August 1946. Return address P/76 BAOR. Krzysztanek wrote of his plans to migrate to Canada or to the USA, but was aware that it was not an easy thing to do. He had no intention of returning to Communist-run Poland for fear of being deported to Siberia for the second time in his life.

Endnotes:

[1] A "dumb cancel" is a postal cancellation that does not state any location or date. It was intended for use in wartime to prevent the enemy gathering information about troop movements from captured mail.

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"Veteran" New York, Nos. 753, 885, 1025 and 1061

Polonus Members Excel in Japan

Three Polonus members received medals at the Japan World Stamp Exhibition 2011, PHILANIPPON 2011, held in Yokohama, Japan on 28 July – 2 August. This international event featured 528 exhibits (2327 frames) of philatelic material representing exhibitors from 65 countries. Of the total number of exhibits, 12 were of Polish material, 2 of which were entered by Polonus members. Robert Puchala received a gold medal for his exhibit "The 1919 Cra-kow Issue" and Dr. Jerzy Kupiec-Weglinski received a gold medal for his exhibit "The Airmail in Poland (1918-1939)". The third Polonus member, Dzintars Grinfelds, received a vermeil medal for "The "3-Star" Coat of Arms Issues of Latvia: 1921-1933". Congratulations to these Polonus members for earning such high marks in international competition.



Czesław Słania - Master Engraver

By: John Campbell

Have you ever marveled at the intricacies of the design of postage stamps? In particular when the stamp has been printed from an engraving, which in turn may have been taken from the artist's oil or watercolor? Has it been reduced to suit the stamp size? No, in most cases the engraving, is made the same size as a stamp. Steel engraving however, gives one the feel and impression of full movement and emo-

tion, and is sharper in appearance. Have a look at a banknote from your wallet – by no means as small a design as postage stamps, but nevertheless a great representation of an engraver's skill.

Czesław Słania, Polish by birth, is without doubt the most prolific engraver the world has ever known. One could say that his fine work is truly "Art in Miniature" and has thrilled both stamp collectors and artists alike.



Figure 1 – (L-R) John Campbell with Czesław Słania in Stockholm, Sweden

I was apprenticed in the mid-1950's as an engraver/color proofer in the printing trade, and like many youngsters had a schoolboy collection of stamps. I immigrated to New Zealand about the same time that my twin brother, Fred, moved to Sweden. Knowing my interest in stamps, he started sending me First-Day covers featuring wonderful Swedish stamps, causing me to resume an earlier interest in philately. From the stamps received from Sweden, those engraved by Czesław Słania stood out for their fine quality. This was all I needed to start collecting his works. It did not take but a couple of years to realize that he engraved stamps for many countries, as well as fine engravings, banknotes and "private" stamps. Over the next 25 years I was lucky enough to obtain most of his works, and exhibit them at many overseas stamp exhibitions.

I had the great pleasure to meet Słania just once, in 1995, while attending a "NORDIA" Exhibition in Sweden. I met him at his apartment/studio, where I watched him engrave, amongst other subjects, the King Carl XVI Gustaf's 50th Birthday miniature sheet. (**Figure 1 & 2**)



Figure 2 – Czesław Słania at work in his Studio

While I was at his apartment, he told me that he was very concerned about a robbery in his home in which some engravings were stolen. Word had gotten to him that there appeared to be a "dodgy" stamp dealer in Stockholm who was "fencing" some of his material. As I was a complete stranger, I was an ideal person to make discreet inquiries. I entered the stamp shop and asked to see the manager. Under the pretense of wanting to buy Słania material, I was shown numerous items. These I made note of, with prices, and said that as I was going on to Malmo for the "NORDIA" Stamp Ex-

Czesław Słania - Master Engraver (Cont.)

hibition and was expecting funds to be transferred from New Zealand, could he bring the material down to Malmo where I would arrange to purchase them. All this was agreed upon. I then returned to meet up with Słania and give him the good news. Though the manager of the stamp shop did not appear himself in Malmo, one of his staff turned up, without the goods. It appears that the police had contacted and arrested the stamp dealer (though I do not know the outcome). Słania was most grateful for my help and presented

out by country and subject, in chronological order of issue and in full color. The success of this publication prompted me to sell my collection in 2009. Sad in some ways, but I have had many years of enjoyment to putting this collection together, and I have a permanent reminder in the form of my book.

Never again will we see these "Art in Miniature" gems. The world is a far richer place due to Czesław Słania's fine contribution to the art of steel engraving.

It has been a pleasure to be able to share with others my tribute in "Czesław Słania – Master Engraver: 1921 – 2005". (Figure 3)

"Czesław Słania – Master Engraver: 1921-2005", by John Campbell, 192 pages, A4 landscape (297x210), full color, Perfect bound. Published by Radway Press, 1c Haumoana Road, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand. Price per copy (including post and packaging) from publisher – NZ\$90.00, US\$75.00, 50 GBP Pounds, 60.00 Euros. E-mail: johncampbellnz@hotmail.com

Editor's Note: John Campbell is a Polonus member from New Zealand. I purchased

my copy of his book in 2009 and find it to be an invaluable reference to Słania's work. This book has three distinct sections: (1) Postage stamps & non-postal labels, by country; (2) Un-adopted stamps & banknote portraits; and (3) Banknote designs, by country. The stamps, covers and related material are reduced to 70% of actual size, reproduced in excellent color quality, and presented in a non-cluttered layout with captions. This is not a catalog containing all of Słania's work, but an illustration of John Campbell's personal collection. In addition to being a great reference, the book is most enjoyable.

CZESLAW SLANIA - MASTER ENGRAVER



Figure 3 – Cover of John Campbell's book

me with some nice items, as well as signing most of the FDC's that I had with me. I was both honored and pleased to help the "Great Engraver Extraordinaire".

With an extra interest in philatelic writing, in 2007 I decided to write a book on Słania, using all my A3 size, (297x420mm) pages. These I reduced by around 70% of the original size giving it an A4 landscape "coffee table" presentation. The book is laid

Better than Printing Money - A Follow-Up

By: Roman Sobus

My walk through the internet marketplace searching for laser printed philatelic rarities was an eye opener. I was amazed at the variety of material being printed on the home or office laser printer, and being sold as a forgery. More astonishing was the fact that the disclaimers hinted that the item may actually be genuine.

My article in Bulletin 543, on the topic of forgeries being sold online, raised the question as to whether the buyers knew exactly what they were purchasing. As a follow-up, I sent a questionnaire to purchasers of eBay items that I knew for certain were fake. Aware that responding blindly to someone requesting information from cyberspace is somewhat a leap of faith, I was surprised when the individuals contacted were kind enough to reply to my query regarding their purchase. The respondents fell into two distinct groups:

The first were surprised to learn that they had not purchased a genuine item. Many of these respondents felt cheated and were going through the process of requesting refunds. Time, however, will make it difficult to obtain refunds, as in many cases several weeks had passed since their purchase. I would like to share some of their replies to my request for information:

"Hi, How can you tell if these mini sheets are forgeries by looking on the e-bay site unless you are selling these stamps? How did you know that these were forgeries? I bought these on goodwill from the seller and I did not know that they were forgeries.R"

and

"thank you for your concern I bid on these Items together with Poland 1 after reading his disclaimer about "Falsification" I assumed - wrongly he was covering himself as he could not prove that these Items were genuine. I was under the impression that eBay did not allow the sale of "Home Made Items" i.e. Fakes so I bought the Items. My Fault but this Seller should be not allowed to Trade ! Regards, j-"

and

"Hello, I did not know they were a forgery, a stupidity of me. Kind Regards, j"

Then of course there were buyers that fell into the second group. These knew very well, or at least

suspected, that the items were not genuine and proceeded to purchase them anyway. Here are some of their responses:

"hello, I bought this item because i am a collector of polish stamps since 30 years This stamp is for me the opportunity to have the 10k in my collection but I dont know if the stamp is a fallsification or not. Anyway the stamp is in my album and it is the principal thing for me. Best regards,-I"

and

"thanks for your question. Yes, I knew that one way or another the stamps I purchased were not the genuine overprints. I presume that the stamps themselves are genuine. They are reasonably cheap and easy to find. The stamps in question has a catalogue value of around 6000 Euro and only 440 stamps were issued. I am trying to get my simplified Poland collection complete and there is no way I ever find or would be able to pay for the genuine article. Even stamps that have a marking to "prove" that they are genuine are often false, as the signature is copied.

The same applies to the postage due stamps, where value go up to 22,000 Euro for the genuine article.

Now if you have been watching the offerings closely, you might have noticed that there were overprinted postage due stamps, which did not even appear in the catalogue. I asked the seller what the catalogue number was, using either Michel, Stanly Gibbons or Yvert, but he did not know. So "new issues" are created at the same time, I think. I would very much like to see the results of your study."

I have not edited the content of the replies and they appear above as I had received them. The names are changed or deleted to protect the respondents' privacy.

I was hoping to illustrate a visual comparison between the genuine article and a laser printer fake. Acquiring a fabrication was, however, more difficult than I envisioned. I bid on more than 20 different items, hoping to procure at least one for use as an illustration in this article. I was solidly beaten each and every time. I hope the winners knew what they were buying. I know I did!

If you have knowingly or unknowingly purchased modern laser printer forgeries on an online auction, I would like to hear from you. Contact me at Rso-bus9013@cs.com.



Date of Issue	June 30, 2011
Sheet Format	4 stamps with tabs
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Anna Niemierko

Polish Presidency of the EU Council

This 3 zł stamp recognizes Poland's new role as host of the Presidency of the European Union Council beginning on July 1, 2011. Poland is the first of a 3-state trio that will hold the Presidency in successive 6-month terms over the next 18 months, with Denmark and Cypress following. Some of the more important issues likely to be considered during Poland's Presidency include immigration policy, Eurozone financial rescue packages, and the new EU budget for 2014-20. Poland also plans to include the issues of economic integration and security measures. Kraków hosted the start of Poland's symbolic role with a host of cultural events, to be followed by numerous conferences, seminars, and meetings in several Polish cities during the second half of 2011. Over 10,000 EU officials are expected to attend. The official logo for Poland's EU Council Presidency was designed by Jerzy Janiszewski, creator of the famous Solidarity (Solidarność) logo. The new logo shown on the stamp has 6 arrow heads directed upward with a flag, perhaps symbolic of growth/progress, energy, and solidarity; the stamp tab portrays an individual with upraised arms within the circle of 12 stars emblematic of the EU. An official first day cover accompanies the stamp with tab.



Date of Issue	June 30, 2011
Sheet Format	Single in SS
Printing Method	Engraving, Rotogravure
Designer	Marzanna Dąbrowska

100th Birth Anniversary of Czesław Miłosz

This 4.15 zł stamp honors the famous poet and writer Czesław Miłosz, born in Šeteniai (Szetejnie) in central Lithuania. He claimed a multiple ethnicity associated with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, refusing a singular designation as either Pole or Lithuanian. He stated that "I am a Polish, not a Lithuanian, poet. But the landscapes and perhaps the spirit of Lithuania have never abandoned me." In 1951 he defected to the West, living in France for several years. In 1953 he wrote "The Captive Mind", presenting an anti-Stalinist viewpoint. In 1960 he migrated to the USA, taught Slavic languages and literature at the University of California (Berkeley), and in 1970 became a US citizen. He was

awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1980 and is honored at Israel's Yad Vashem memorial to the holocaust as one of the "Righteous among the Nations." In 2004 he died at his home in Kraków at age 94. The souvenir sheet shows him seated in a rocking chair; a special collector's edition of the souvenir sheet was also issued, as well as an official first day cover showing him enjoying the outdoors.