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The Yugoslavia Study Group

Founded in 1984 to promote the study of the stamps and postal history of Yugoslavia, its predecessor and successor states

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Jugopošta



Contents	Page
From the President	4
From the Editor	4
Advertisement for YSG online meeting	4
Joint Societies Meeting report by Roger Morrell	5
Report of YSG meeting held online on 4 October 2022	7
Which stamps are valid where and when in the SHS, 1918 – 1921: Part 2 by Henk Buitenkamp	8
Mirror prints: Part 1 by Hans-Dieter Engel	12
Additional services and other special marks on SHS parcel cards, 1919 – 22: Part 2b - value letters – Carinthia, Croatia and Dalmatia by Vid Žiberna	20
Report of a YSG meeting held online on 21 June 2022	26
The occupation of Bosnia and Hercegovina in 1878 by Boštjan Petauer	27
Publications	32



From the President

I'm glad to say things are getting back to normal with local club meetings but "Zoom" meetings are still going on (including YSG), and I think in the future this will continue. Although "Zoom" is not as sociable as face to face meetings, it does have advantages: for example, recently I took part in a "Zoom" meeting which was attended by participants from USA, Canada, Netherlands, Germany, Austria as well as GB. It was great that you could talk with members from overseas that you may not normally ever see. It is possible that such meetings will continue to take place in the future.

Once again, I make an appeal to members for someone to step forward and take up the post of Auction Manager; a job that gives an extra benefit to members, and enables them not only to enhance their collections but also to allow them to pass on surplus material.

A J Bosworth FRPSL

From the Editor

First of all, my apologies for the delay in publishing this edition. I've had some medical issues which have led me to give priority to other things.

We had a good YSG Zoom meeting on 4 October with 12 of us present and 6 presentations (see the report). I've also included reports of the previous Zoom meeting on 21 June and the Joint Societies meeting held in Leeds (thanks to Roger Morrell for the latter). I'm planning to set up another Zoom meeting for January (see below).

In this edition you will find continuing articles by Henk Buitenkamp and Vid Žiberna and other articles by Boštjan Petauer (the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878) and Hans-Dieter Engel (mirror printed stamps of the NDH).

Given the delay to this edition, I will need to start quite soon on the December edition. I have 2 or 3 short articles to include but I will definitely need more material for this edition, so please see what you can do for me.

YSG meeting to be held on Zoom

on

Tuesday 17 January at 18:00 (UK time)

Details will be provided nearer the time but get working on that presentation!

Joint Societies Meeting, Brown Cow, Whitkirk, Leeds, Saturday 13 August 2022

by Roger Morrell, with photos by Andy Taylor

On a very fine, but very hot, day sixteen souls from the Austrian, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Polish and Yugoslav specialist societies braved the busy roads and the rail strike, some arriving in shorts and sandals, to enjoy a day of central European philately variety organised by Yvonne Wheatley. Unfortunately, compared with previous events, these were numbers depleted by temperature, transport and domestic issues, but nonetheless an excellent time was had by all. Also, besides apologies for absence, Yvonne Wheatley had to announce that unfortunately Malcom Stockhill of the Polish Society, a long-standing attendee, had passed away earlier in the week.

Four rounds of short displays compèred by Richard Wheatley were held before lunch, and two more afterwards, the following eclectic mix of subject matter being shown:

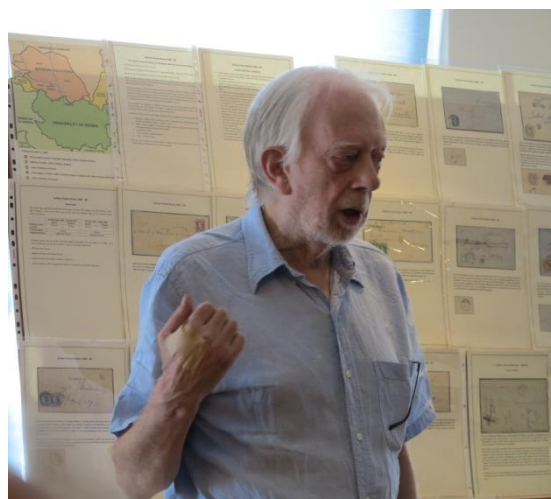
- Martin Brumby: Official free-post cards of Austria from the 1870s to the 1920s, and a few from Hungary (in two parts), with identification of all the issue types, some of which appeared to be very scarce, or simply 'not seen'.
- Roger Morrell: Troubled times in Ukraine – the philately of the various parts of Ukraine during and after both WW1 (Western Ukraine, Romanian occupation, Polish and Bolshevik intervention) and WW2 (German occupation, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Subcarpathian National Government and Soviet interventions), with a bit of historical scene setting and some maps to help.
- Joyce Boyer: The Innsbruck to Vienna TPO through the ages, shown in two parts, Vienna to Salzburg and Salzburg to Innsbruck, showing the postmarks, some questionable.
- Keith Brandon: Russia to Western Europe pre-stamp mail from Ukrainian towns via various routes and identified by postmarks, commencing with the Danube route from the 1830s but changing with the development of the railways which provided faster connections.
- Nick Coverdale: Mail from Serbia to Austria-Hungary 1867-1880. Post was initially handled via the Austrian Consulate in Belgrade, but from 1869 was handled by the Serbs themselves through the Austria-Serbia Postal Union with reduced rates which changed again in 1875 following the UPU convention.
- Yvonne Wheatley: Small, 'thimble' datestamps of Austria introduced from 1867, especially from places destined to become Czechoslovakia.
- Wojciech Kierstan: East Prussia and the development of the Polish Corridor in 1920, including the local stamp issues for plebiscite areas Marienwerder and Allenstein.
- Garth Taylor: The Czech Grand Prix of the 1930s on the 29 km long circuit near Brno, with postmarks and commemorative cards, including some of the drivers and their successes.
- Andy Taylor: Austrian composers and music as commemorated on stamps, with the accompaniment of the Austrian National Anthem played on his phone, shown in two parts.
- Alan Berrisford: Warsaw local delivery post under German occupation, 1916-18, including stamps and the six series of hand-stamped marks displayed on covers, with rate changes, shown in two parts.

- Richard Jagielski: Polish Camp stamps during WWII, including Montecassino and the rapidly withdrawn Mountbatten issues, with covers collected by his father during and after, supported by resettlement documents and other ephemera.
- Peter Chadwick: History of East Prussia including WW1 plebiscites, the Polish corridor, WWII occupations and the eventual formation of the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad.
- Wojciech Kierstan: The Prague Exhibition of 1968 with all the special issues for each day and covers with the appropriate postmarks.
- Richard Wheatley: The Czech Airmen series of 1945 in complete sheets, noting only one 'error', a 'feather in the cap', which ironically he then couldn't locate when pressed.
- Garth Taylor: The US WWII stamp series showing the flags of oppressed nations and covers bearing the stamps sent to various envoys and military attachés.
- Roger Morrell: The introduction in 1918/19 of special Hungarian newspaper money orders for paying for newspaper subscriptions, and the confusion this caused among post office staff.
- Richard Jagielski: The first post-WWII issue of Poland printed in Russia with overprints and postal history.

Before the thirsty audience rushed for the cakes and tea, Andy Taylor gave a vote of thanks to Yvonne for hosting the meeting and making all the arrangements (some of which sounded very frustrating). In response, Yvonne said she was considering the possibility of changing the next meeting to a weekday to improve the chances of more reliable public transport and lunchtime catering, which attendees welcomed (since we are all getting older!).



(From top) Keith Brandon and Martin Brumby study the Polish forces issues; Keith Brandon explains the mail routes from Russia; Martin Brumby's display attracts attention from many.



Report of a YSG meeting held online on 4 October 2022

by Nick Coverdale

Twelve members were present from the UK, Canada, Slovenia, Denmark, France, Switzerland and the USA. There were six presentations:

1. First stamps for the Slovene Littoral and Istria, 1945, of Miroslav Oražem by Veselko Gustin
2. Untersteiermark by Martin Brumby
3. A Serbian censor mark of unknown origin during WWI by Jérôme Bourguignat
4. Undercover mail by Hans-Dieter Engel
5. Serbian stamped revenue paper for invoices by Richard Stevens
6. Hungarian occupation of Yugoslavian Bačka, 1941 by Nick Coverdale

Which stamps are valid where and when in the SHS, 1918 – 1921: Part 2

by Henk Buitenkamp AEP NAF

1.3 Mežica area

The Mežica area was occupied by the SHS from 28-5-1919. It became part of Slovenia by the Treaty of Saint-Germain 10-9-1919. Austrian stamps stayed valid but Slovenian stamps were introduced as soon as possible and available to buy at all post offices.



Figure 10: Prevalje 1-2-1920. Here it is used as a regular stamp with Porto. It was probably only used as such between 31-1-1920 and 1-2-1920.

1.4 Area of Zgornje Jezersko (= Ober Seeland)

This area was occupied by Slovenia from October 1918 and became an official part of Slovenia by the Agreement of Saint-Germain 20-7-1920. Austrian stamps stayed valid but were replaced as soon as possible by Slovenian stamps.



Figure 11(reduced): Sankt Paul in Lavantthal 25-6-1919. Here, the Slovenian issue has been used with an Austrian postage due stamp for franking. Up to now, only two complete items of this area have been recorded.

1.6 Upper part of Carinthia (the so-called Zone II)

The area around Klagenfurt was occupied from 28-5-1919 to 31-7-1919. Normally Austrian stamps were used there, but in Klagenfurt (= Celovec) Slovenian stamps were used and bought. Slovenian stamps may have been used in other towns too, but I have no information about that.



Figure 12: *Vojaški Poštni urad Celovec* (= military post office)

1.7 Lower part of Carinthia (the so-called Zone I)

This area was occupied twice:

- Firstly: December 1918 to 7-5-1919. I have no information about the use of Slovenian stamps in this period but it is possible.
- Secondly: 28-5-1919 to 18-11-1920. Austrian stamps stayed valid, but Slovenian stamps were introduced as soon as possible. One could buy them at the post offices.



Figure 13: Velikovec 16-9-1920 to Graz. From the second occupation period.

2 Croatia

In Croatia, we must distinguish between the Croatian mainland and Dalmatia. On the mainland they were using up Hungarian stamps. Moreover, Bosnian stamps were accepted. Of course, the stamps with the overprint Hrvatska/SHS were not able to be bought at all post offices; the other Croatian issues were used and able to be bought at all post offices. The Listopada issue was only valid on 29 October 1918. As far as I know, Austrian stamps were not forbidden for use on the mainland. After using up the regional stamps, the Slovenian issues were used.

In Dalmatia (a former Kronland), Austrian stamps were used up and then Slovenian stamps were used and could be bought at all Dalmatian post offices. I have not found that it was forbidden to use the Croatian stamps in Dalmatia.



Figure 14 (reduced): Zagreb 14-4-1920. Here a combination of Croatian, Slovenian and Bosnian stamps have been used. Up to now only 3 letters have been recorded with this combination.

2.1 Međimurje

On 24-12-1918 Međimurje was occupied and was a definitive part of Croatia from 15-1-1919. Hungarian stamps stayed valid in the first instance but Slovenian stamps were used there too. The stamps overprinted by the Postal Direction Zagreb were also used in this area.

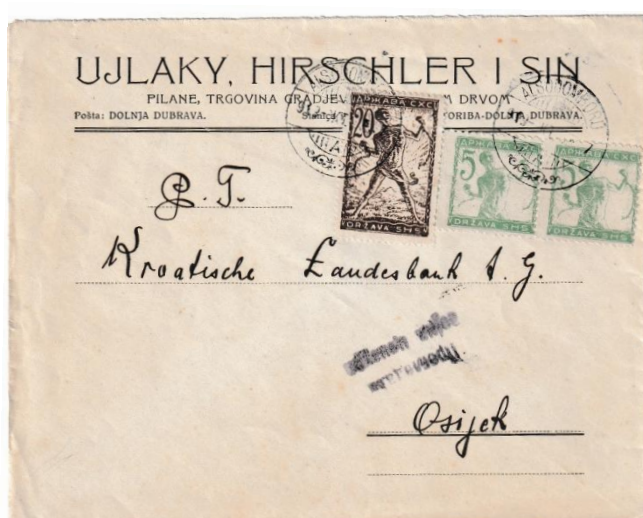


Figure 15 (reduced): Alsodomboru (= Donja Dubrava) 10-1919

The Prelog (= Perlak) issue

In the “Uredovna Potvrda” (a document of a Hungarian postal clerk) we read of the official local overprinting of Hungarian stamps with SHS. These overprinted stamps were produced on 26/27-12-1918. They were overprinted by order of Capt. Gašparić. The overprinted stamps were used at the post offices of Perlak and Kisszabadka (= Mala Subotica). The stamps were first used in January 1919. The stamps were used for a long time (December 1919 is known). Hungarian and Croatian stamps were used next to these stamps and later on Slovenian stamps were used.



Figure 16: Kisszabadka (= Mala Subotica) 17-2-1919. The 15 Filler is overprinted in violet. Up to now, 2 letters and 1 single stamp are recorded with this overprint colour on the 15 F.

The Mursko Središće issue

Here Hungarian stamps were overprinted locally with SHS on 25-12-1918 by order of Capt. Jurišić. They were used in Muraszerdahely (= Mursko Središće), Muraszentmártton (= Sv. Martin na Muri) and Stridóvár (= Štrigova). The first day of use was 31-12-1918. The use of Croatian stamps and later Slovenian stamps is known.

Strip on the Hungarian side of the Drava

This small strip was occupied for the railway and was occupied from December 1918 until ???. Of course, Hungarian stamps were used but there are letters known with stamps of Croatia with the overprint Hrvatska/SHS from Gyékényes.

Mirror Prints: Part 1

by Hans-Dieter Engel, Forch near Zurich

Several editions of Croatian stamps have been printed also as mirror prints. But for what purpose have mirror prints been used? The former examiner Michael Wieneke explained it to me with a few words.

Mirror prints are actually a necessary intermediate product in a printing process. Mirror printing is necessary, for example, if you want to go from a positive template to a negative template to the actually – positive – print image from which the printing plate is then ultimately produced (by duplication) (shown in simplified form). In the print shop, “prints” are often made of these individual steps for quality control purposes. Normally, these “quality controls” end up in the print shop’s archive (for any complaints that may arise). In the time of the NDH, however, they had the “philatelic potential” of these prints in mind and produced more intermediate products (mirror prints, phases etc.) than were technically necessary.

Today, I would like to show several mirror prints from the KRILA edition (Model Plane Exhibition, issued 25 March 1942). Michel No. 70 – 71 as well as souvenir sheets 74 – 77.



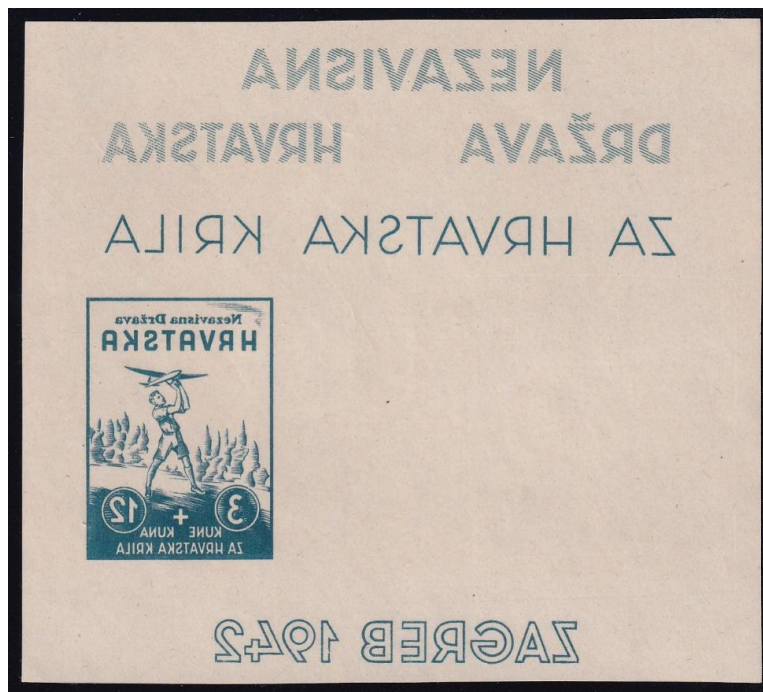
Foreground print in black colour

Mr Phil Hughes wrote in his manual that the mirror prints in black are from the Postal Ministry. This is somewhat doubtful as from the KRILA set I myself have 2 complete sets. A Postal Ministry would keep only 1 set for reference and not more. There must be more sets available.

Not only the stamps have been printed in this kind of print but also the souvenir sheets



Printed on slightly brownish, ungummed paper, only the foreground



Partial foreground print in light blue colour on white ungummed paper



Souvenir sheet printed only with the foreground in a red-brown colour on ungummed brownish paper



*Both
sheets
reduced to
80%*

Souvenir sheet with full stamp on the left hand side in carmine-brown. Also on brownish ungummed paper.

Special blocks of 4 were also printed. These blocks of 4 became known as sheetlets and can be recognised by their extra-wide margins.

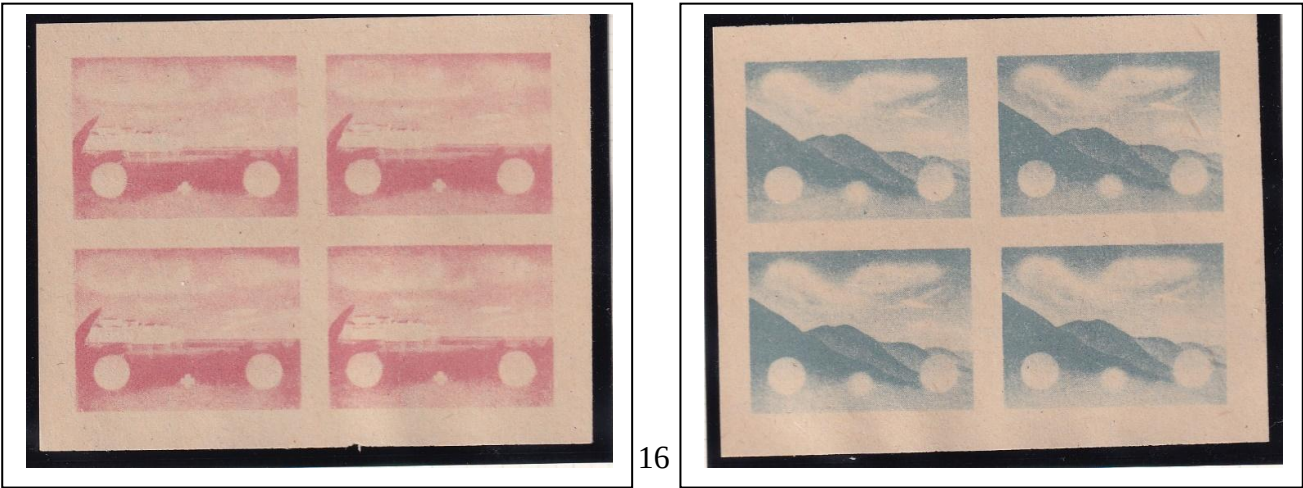


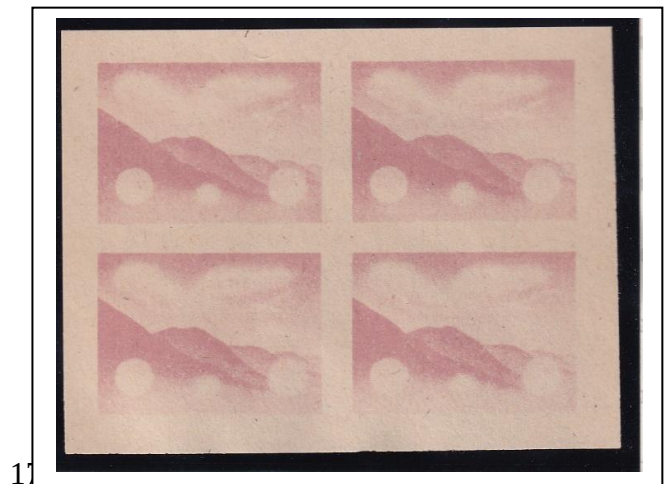
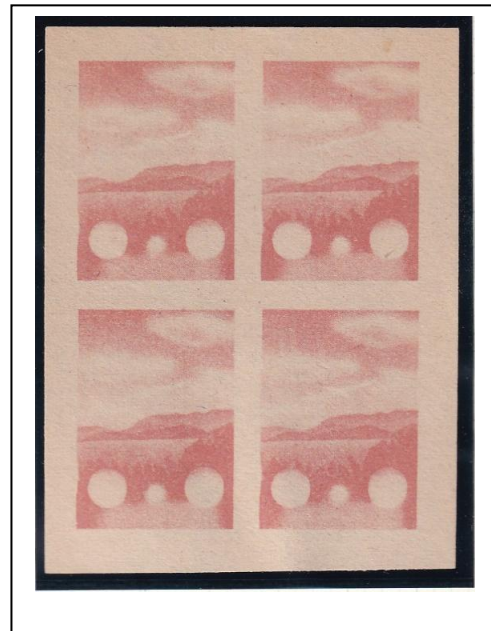
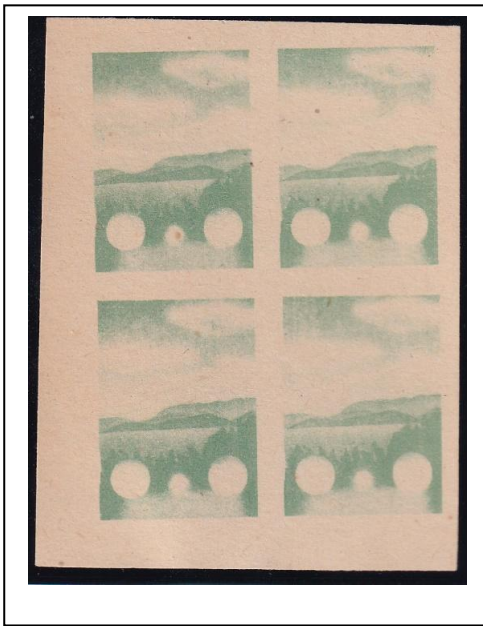
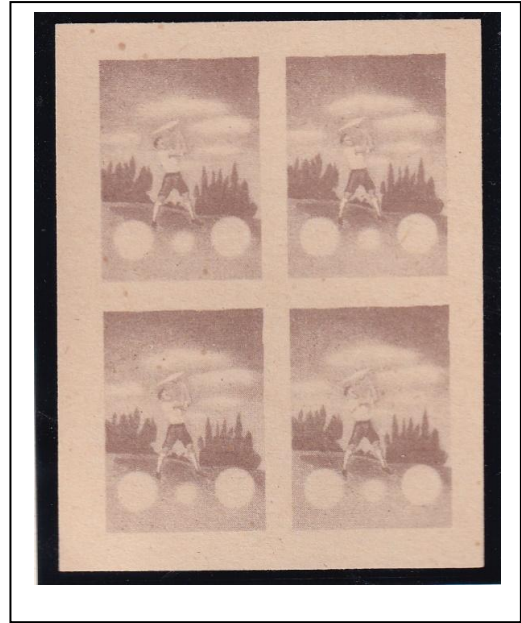
Sheetlets in non-issued trial colours, all in the form of blocks of 4 with extra wide margins

Sheetlet and stamps in non-issued colour brown partially the extra-wide margins are the proof that the stamps are cut out of a sheetlet.



Sheetlets printed only with background print.





Some single examples printed only in background print, partially cut out from sheetlets.



And finally some fully-printed stamps (fore- and background print) in non-issued colours of blue and red.





And the original issued colour, carmine-brown.



Additional services and other special marks on SHS parcel cards, 1919 – 22: Part 2b – value letters – Carinthia, Croatia and Dalmatia

by Vid Žiberna

Introduction

The SHS parcel cards from the period 1919 – 22 covered in this article are widely accessible on the market. However, given the absence in the literature of a typological classification of the stickers, handmade stamps and other special marks that appear on them, the average collector tends to focus on the chronological (date-based) collection of postmarks on parcel cards and any rare frankings (e.g. ordinary postage stamps used as postage due provisional stamps, bisects, mass frankings, rare postage due stamps such as the so-called turquoise stamps.) The story is the same as with stamps; what is not catalogued does not interest collectors as they do not have a basis for systematic classification.

In fact, however, these additional stickers/marks and handmade stamps on parcel cards, like W, V, B, E, M, SP, A, Dringend, T, U, Sperrgut, Express, prevoz dovoljen, AUSGEFOLGT LAGERZINS, utánvétél pouzeče and Ret, offer significant aspects for collection. In this article, I am going to deal with the stickers with the letter “W”, “V” or double “WW” vertically one over the other. I will deal with other services denoted with these additional stickers/marks and handmade stamps in future articles.

The Stickers “W”, “V” and “WW”

The sticker “V” means (French valeur déclarée) and the sticker “W” (with a bigger or smaller part of the ornament) or “WW” with one W over another vertically (Wert in German). Stickers with the letters V and W were obligatorily applied on all value packets, meaning packets with the declared value over 600 Kronen (later 150 dinar) and packets including cash, valuables, gold and silver items, which were not declared with the letter B.

Carinthia



Figure 15 (reduced): a Slovenian reimbursement parcel card from Borovlje (Austria) to Zvornik (Bosnia), weight: 4.7 kg, value: 800 Kronen, content: ?

Croatia



Figure 16 (reduced): a bilingual Hungarian parcel card from Gospić (Croatia) to Zagreb (Croatia), weight: 20 kg, value: 20, content: clothes. A sticker “V” with frame.



Figure 17 (reduced): a bilingual Hungarian parcel card from Retkovci (Croatia) to Križevci (Croatia), weight: 8.2 kg, value: 605 Krones, content: box of merchandise. A sticker “V” without frame.

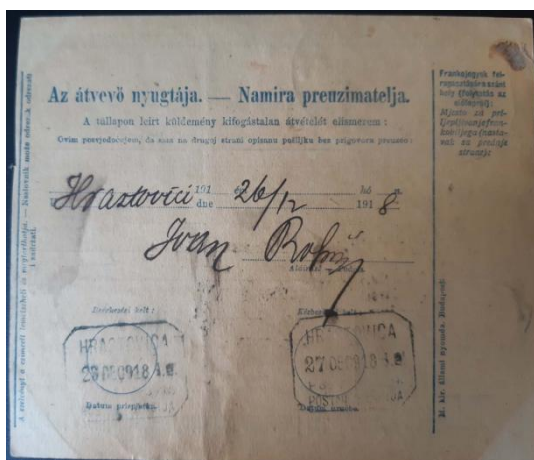


Figure 18 (reduced): a bilingual Hungarian parcel card from Ličko Petrovo selo (Croatia) to Hrastovica (Croatia), weight: 12 kg, value: 700 Krones, content: clothes. Handwritten “V”.



Figure 19 (reduced): a bilingual Hungarian parcel card from Sinj (Croatia) to Semič (Slovenia), weight: 12.7 kg, value: 650 Kronas, content: ? Handwritten “V” + handwritten postal name sticker. Complete parcel cards from Croatia with coupon are rare.



Figure 20 (reduced): a bilingual Hungarian parcel card from Požega (Croatia) to Gradačac (Bosnia), weight: 1.5 kg, value: 800 Kronas, content: clothes. Handwritten “V”. Rare object.



Figure 21 (reduced): a bilingual Hungarian reimbursement parcel card from Lokve (Croatia) to Travnik (Bosnia), weight: 5 kg, value: 1000 Krones, content: ?



Figure 22 (reduced): a bilingual Hungarian reimbursement parcel card from Zagreb (Croatia) to Bijelina (Bosnia), weight: 19 kg, value: 2400 Krones, content: cotton. Handwritten "V".



Figure 23 (reduced): a Slovenian reimbursement parcel card from Zagreb (Croatia) to Sarajevo (Bosnia), weight: 19 kg, value: ?, content: paper. Handwritten "V".

Dalmatia



Figure 24 (reduced): a multilingual Austrian parcel card from Postire (Dalmatia) to Zagreb (Croatia), weight: 11.5 kg, value: 700 Krones: content: package of fishes.



Figure 25 (reduced): a multilingual Austrian parcel card from Slano (Dalmatia) to Zagreb (Croatia), weight: 5.5 kg, value: 650 Krones: content: laundry and a silver watch. Handwritten "W".

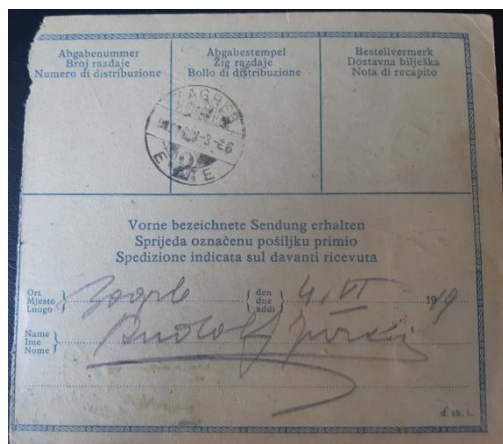


Figure 26 (reduced): a multilingual Austrian parcel card from Novasela (Dalmatia) to Zagreb (Croatia), weight: 11 kg, value: 900 Krones: content: chocolate. Handwritten "W".

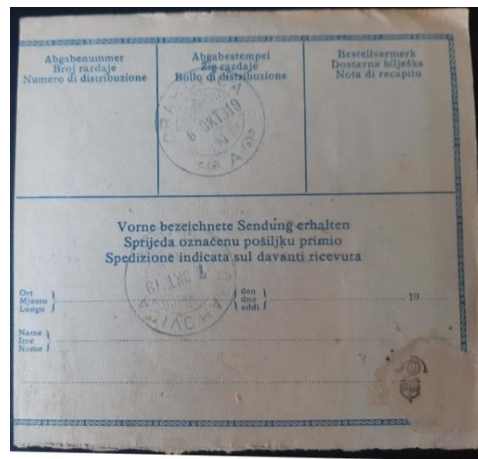


Figure 27 (reduced): a multilingual Austrian reimbursement parcel card from Sinj (Dalmatia) to Orahovica (Croatia), weight: 13 kg, value: 1000 Kronen: content: medicines.



Figure 28 (reduced): a Slovenian reimbursement parcel card from Milna (Dalmatia) to Sarajevo (Bosnia), weight: 14.8 kg, value: ?: content: box of sardines. Handwritten "W".

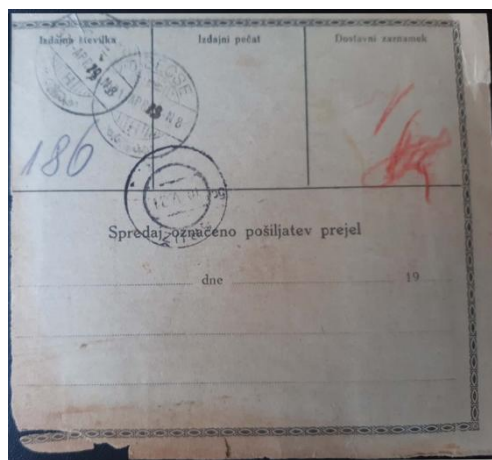


Figure 29 (reduced): a Slovenian reimbursement parcel card from Gruž (Dalmatia) to Bečej (Vojvodina), weight: 13.8 kg, value: ?: content: box of sardines. Handwritten "W" and a "T" sticker. More about the "T" sticker in in a future article.

Scarcity

Mixed franking on SHS parcel cards is very common, of course there are some exceptions. The same goes for porto stamps used as franco in Sarajevo (Bosnia).

“In terms of Scarcity, I use a scale of 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum). The average parcel card with the letter V or W would be ranked 1; the cards with additional letter B would be ranked 3; the cards with additional letter T would be ranked 4. A hand written letter V or W would be ranked 3.”

Conclusion

Basically, the stickers with the letter W or WW were used in Bosnia, Carinthia, Dalmatia, Montenegro and Slovenia and the stickers with letter V in Bosnia, Croatia and Vojvodina, other examples are not familiar to me. If anybody knows of any other combinations, please let me know as I am very interested.

If you have any related questions and comments (in English, German, Croatian, Serbian Cyrillic, Slovenian) please send them to me at: vid.zibera@gmail.com.

Sources:

Collection Vid Žibera (all images).

Uradni listi poštne in brzojavne ravnateljstva za slovensko ozemlje (1919).

Uradni listi poštne in brzojavne ravnateljstva za slovensko ozemlje (1920).

Uradni listi poštne in brzojavne ravnateljstva za slovensko ozemlje (1921).

Wolf, Anton (1928) – Pravilniki in navodila za izvrševanje poštne službe v Kraljevini Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev, Ljubljana.

Žibera, Vid (2021): Additional services and other special marks on SHS parcel cards, 1919-22 – part 1. Jugopošta, no. 139, pp 5 – 19.

Part 2c of this article will follow.

Report of a YSG meeting held online on 21 June 2022

by Nick Coverdale

Thirteen members were present from the UK, the USA, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Slovenia, Denmark and Canada. There were four presentations:

1. Overprinted post cards at the time of SHS Croatia (part 2) by Hans-Dieter Engel
2. Bosnian Landscape Issue plate numbers by Roy Gelder
3. Chainbreakers by Dave Foster
4. Montenegro 1919 issue by Richard Stevens

The occupation of Bosnia and Hercegovina in 1878

by Boštjan Petauer, FRPSL

In accordance with chapter XXV of the Treaty of Berlin dated 13 July 1878, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, also due to pogroms carried out by Muslims against the Christian population, was given permission to occupy Bosnia and Hercegovina, which was then under Turkish rule; formally, this situation existed until 1908, when the country was annexed by Austria.

After appropriate preparations on 28 July 1878 its 13th Army Corps under the command of General Josip Filipović crossed the Bosnian border from Slavonia in the north, and on 1 August 1878 its 13th Infantry Corps battalion under the command of Stjepan Jovanović crossed the border in the south and penetrated from Dalmatia into Hercegovina. The resistance of the Muslim population was greater than expected (they knew that as Muslims they would lose their privileges), so additional reinforcements were needed. Sarajevo was occupied on 18 August 1878 and, with the fall of the fortress at Velika Kladuša on 20 October 1878, the occupation was completed. In total, approximately 160,000 Austro-Hungarian soldiers participated in the occupation; as will be seen in the continuation of this paper, there were also Slovenians among them.

Organisation of the occupation postal service

During the occupation, Turkish post offices ceased to operate. They were replaced by a well-organised Austrian postal service, which was initially mobile and closely followed the needs of the military. At the army level there was the head military post office (Hauptfeldpostamt), at the level of the corps the leading (directing) military post office (Feldpostleitung), on the territory of the Monarchy the military post collection (Feldpost-Sammelstellen), and at the divisions the military post branch (Feldpostexpositur). In the latter case, the numbers of the branches match the number of the unit to which they belonged. All mentioned postal units also had cancels which, almost without exception, are very or even extremely rare. This is evident from the literature, an important part of which is listed at the end of this paper. Some of the mentioned cancels are not (yet) known on postal items.

There were 19 branches of the military post office (Figure 1, see next page).

A letter from a Slovenian soldier

Some time ago, I was offered an envelope with Feldpostexpositur stamp no. 7, sent to Idrija, a small mining town in Slovenia. The cancel on it was very clear which is not always the case with these cancels. When I opened the envelope, the whole thing seemed rather thick to me, and to my great joy there was a letter written in a clumsy Slovenian script. I quickly bought everything and started studying everything at home.

First of all, I found that the number 7 belonged to the 7th infantry division from Trieste (Idrija was then included in the Trieste military district), which was one of the first to enter Bosnia on 29 July 1878. Until 3 August 1878, the cancel was used in Travnik, later, in the period from

which the letter originates, in Donji Vakuf. It is one of the rarest cancels which is marked with the highest degree of rarity in the literature.

Then I started reading the letter itself, but I didn't get very far. The letter is written in a clumsy hand of a peasant and, in addition, in an ancient language and, as the letter, says, written on the author's knee, and I have not been able to decipher it. That's why I asked a fellow philatelist, Dr. Bojan Himmelreich from the Provincial Archives in Celje to help me with this letter, and I soon got an answer. He not only transcribed the letter, but also translated it into modern Slovenian (he had to put in a lot of effort because, as can be seen from the text, some parts were quite illegible), for which I thank him very much. The differences between the languages of the two periods are quite considerable, but let's leave that to the linguists. The letter is certainly interesting, as it shows how ordinary soldiers experienced the Bosnian-Herzegovinian campaign; we quote it in the "modern" version.



Figure 1: letter sent from Feldpostexpositur no. 18 (this one was located in Mostar – date illegible) to Rofsbach in the Czech Republic. Partial incoming Czech stamp on the reverse. This cancel is slightly less rare than most of the others.

“Bugojno, 20/21 (?) September

Dear mother, I am writing you a few words about how it is here with us. I'm still here, thank God, if nothing worse happens, it will be over. We've been here for three days, we have one more fort to conquer, it's called Livno. It's terribly bad, we've been here for twelve hours, we guess, then we all go. I think we will be able to overcome, if it is God's will, then we will go to Dalmatia, then to Trieste, and then home. God grant that they may overcome happily. We walked ten days from Gradiska, now we have two more days to Livno. There are an awful lot of

Turks there, who were chased away from elsewhere and fled there to those fortresses. It was hard to walk, but I was still able to walk, I always bought wine to make it easier to walk.

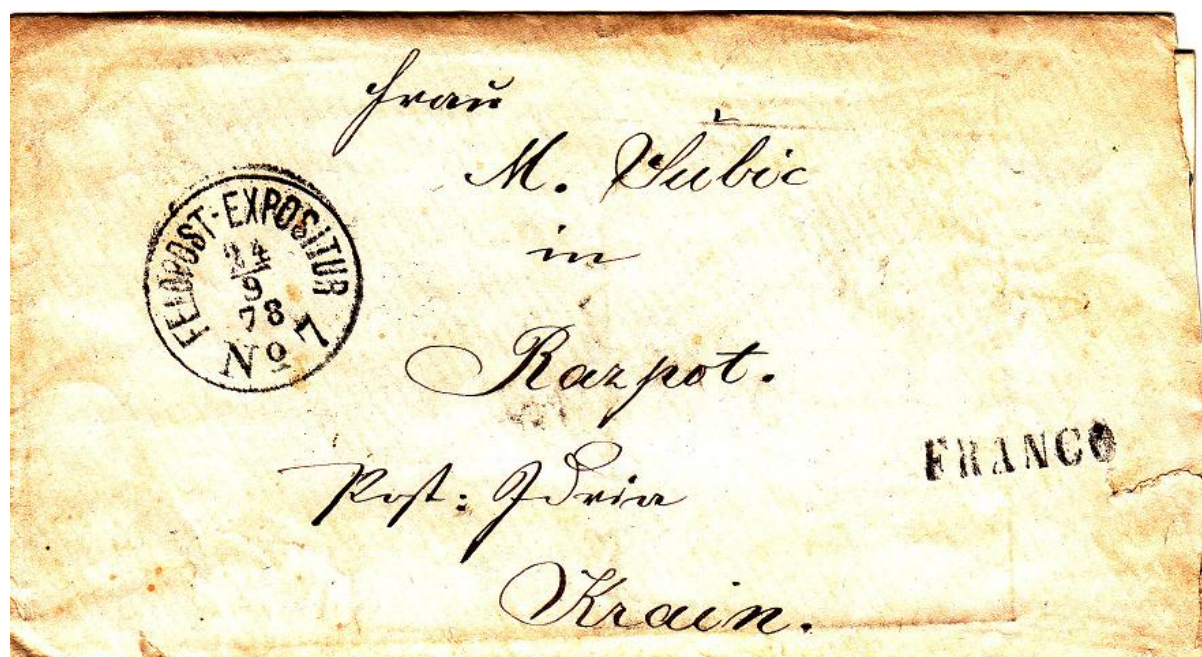


Figure 2: letter from Feldpostexpositur 7 (date 24.9.1878), which was located in Donji Vakufu in Razpot (today Hudinje Razpotje). Like all military letters, this one is free of postage. Sisak transit stamp and Idrija arrival stamp on the back.

It was terribly hot, many of us were collapsing because they couldn't walk. I was afraid because I was in the hospital for so long that I wouldn't be able to walk, but I walked well. Kece Lovrenc (a fellow soldier from Idrija) is also here, he and I are always together and several acquaintances are also here. If God allows us to arrive happily in Trieste, I will already write that someone will come so that we can buy something. God only give health and right mind. So far nothing has been particularly bad for me. God grant that it will be so happy even now. I still have 4 fl of money, I haven't starved yet. (.....) here. Povle-žerani (?) are all still healthy. Terribly strange places are here. Ugly people, black people, such cities are that the whole city is not worth a hundred guilders.

Houses are nailed up, tangled with wicker, covered with mud, but it is still a house. But I get a lot of money, our old money twenties (*kreuzers*), here (is) worth forty soldi. I have nothing new to write. I don't have time; I wrote this on my knee. You will already be reading if you can. I will write as often as I can, when we reach a place. Now I greet you all, Mother, sisters, brother and his wife, farewell, see you again. Write the address like this on the regiment, because you know I'm with the third company, because you already know how, the letter will already get to me, it will already go to the regiment, and the regiment itself will (send) to the companies."

Later, after the stabilisation of the situation, permanent postal units were established (Etappenpostamt in Bosnia and Etappenpostamt in Hercegovina). In Bosnia they were marked with Roman numerals (from I to XXX), and in Hercegovina (1 – 11) with Arabic ones. These

units were later transformed into military post units (Militärpostamt), mostly with the same numbers.



Figure 3: letter from Banja Luka, sent on 18 February 1879 (location of stage post no. XI) to Kranj. It is addressed to Dr. Janez Mencinger, a well-known Slovenian writer (1839 – 1912), who was a lawyer in Kranj in the period 1871 – 1882. Ljubljana transit stamp on the back. The letter is franked according to the internal rate (5 kr) as before 9/1/1879, although it should have been rated according to the external rate (10 kr).

In the beginning, the post office served only military needs and as such mail was free of postage. Limited use for civil purposes (it was necessary to obtain a special permit, which was issued mainly for business correspondence) was officially possible only from 9 January 1879, whereby letters to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had to be franked according to the foreign rate (this only applied to the first weight level and from then on the internal tariff applied) and not to the internal rate. However, private letters have been known since October 1878, when they were franked according to the internal rate. However, as can be seen in Figure 3, these rules were not always followed in practice.

The civilian population could only use the post office fully from 1 July 1879, i.e., the day the first Bosnian-Herzegovinian stamps were issued; whereby letters for Austria-Hungary still had to be franked as before, that is, with the foreign rate for the first weight level, until 16 November 1879. From that day onward, the same rate was used for mail to Austria-Hungary as for domestic mail traffic in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Figure 4: letter from Banja Luka, sent on 14 September 1878, also addressed to Dr. Janz Mencinger: this time the correct tariff (10 kr) is used, which was valid for shipments to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until 16/11/1879. Kranja arrival stamp on the back.

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