

PERFINS

by *Filatelie* Editorial Collective
trans. by Lucie Harris

[Ed. Note: While this article is focused on Protectorate perfins, the concepts and references to the perfin catalog applies to all perfins of Czechoslovakia as well.]

The marking of stamps with little holes (i.e., perfins) -- usually arranged in the form of initials -- was created in England and officially authorized in 1868 as a measure to protect stamps from theft within companies (Fig. 1). Gradually it was expanded to postal stationery, revenue stamps, and other forms; examples with such labeling we are calling *perfins*. Although in various countries they were later also used for other purposes, our report is limited to company perfins. In Austria-Hungary the use of perfins was authorized in 1877. For the area of the Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia the relevant provisions are included in Postal Orders from 1937 or 1944.



Figure 1: Front and reverse sides of a stamp with the perfin "T.S."

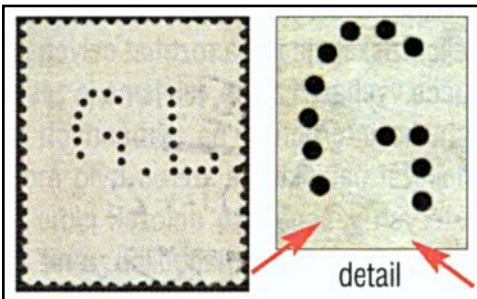


Figure 2: Reverse side of a stamp with the perfin "G.L." as portrayed in the catalog -- one hole usually entirely missing, and two are merely indicated.



Figure 3: Portrayal of the perfin in the catalog.

Most of the perfins known to be on Protectorate stamps were already in use during the First Republic, some even already during Austria-Hungary. Only a few new perfins were created during the time of the Protectorate, and these were usually created by just altering an already used perforating machine (we point these out in the catalog). A considerable number of these perfins can also be briefly found on the stamps of ČSR II after 1945, but most of them stopped before 1948.

We present illustrations of the perfins in the forms that we knew them from the time of the Protectorate formation in March 1939 (in a number of cases they already had missing holes)(Fig. 2). To describe them we are using their designation according to the *Catalog perfinů z území Československa* (Catalog of Perfins of the Czechoslovak Lands)(Maxa, Fejtek, Janeček, 1987)(Fig. 3).

Perfin Positions

Perfins can be found in up to 8 different positions in relation to the image of the stamp (analogous to what is known with watermarks). The positioning of the perfin depended on

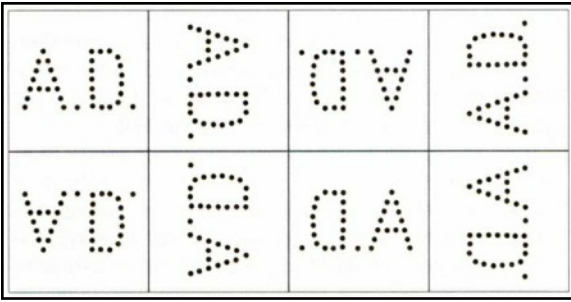


Figure 4: Eight possible positions of the perfin when placed upright in the machine.

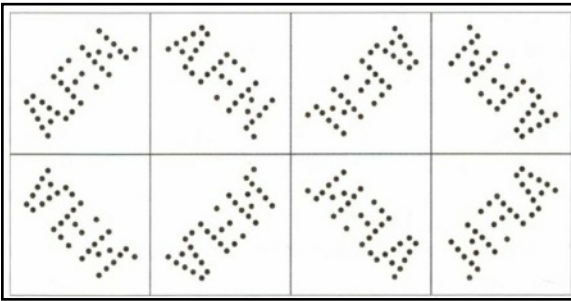


Figure 5: Eight possible positions of the perfin when placed diagonally in the machine.

the design of the perforating machine and the particular operational service. After all, the perfin positioning wasn't the purpose of the action, but rather it was to devalue the stamp to prevent misuse. Usually, several stamps were perforated on top of each other -- a row of them were mirror-folded. We present illustrations of perfins in their various basic positions (Fig. 4). Those that are shown in a diagonal position were placed in the machine that way. (Fig. 5) In terms of valuation, we consider the various positions of perfins generally to be equivalent. From the collector's perspective, perfins in the basic positions are the favorites, not because of the scarcity of occurrence, but rather because of their better presentation.

Perfin Quality

In evaluating quality, we cannot think only about the quality of the stamp or the document itself, but we have to take into account also how the perfin is executed. We regard it as ideal if it is perfectly perforated, well centered, an obviously good perfin in a basic position, and on an undamaged stamp with a highly legible cancel from which can be read the date and place of use. However, in practice, such an ideal combination is not found very often. Therefore, for the basis of evaluation, we use as examples cancelled stamps of normal quality on which is located a clear entire perfin, without regard to its positioning. If the perfin is badly executed or encroaches on the edges of the stamp, it lowers the price. Some of the perforating machines were not in fact well maintained, and thus the majority of their perfins were poorly executed -- these are specifically highlighted.

Perfin Valuations

Most often we find perfins from the Protectorate time frame on the stamp issues of the Linden Leaves (Lípové List) and Landscapes (Krajinský)(which we abbreviate **L+K**) especially in the years 1939-42 -- the occurrence on both issues is about the same. The catalog's perfin valuations apply to the common denominations of both issues. With the larger format Landscape stamps Pof.32-37 [Sc 31-36] the price is 50% higher than the basic stamp value; with the Pof 38-40 and 45-59 [Sc. 37-39, 44-48] higher by 100 %. On the definitive Hitler issues [Sc. 62 83](abbrev. **AH**), perfins occur significantly less often, price + 50%. On the commemorative and semi-postal issues (we identify them as "others" -- "ostatní"

Ost.) perfins occur rarely, price + 200%. Exceptions are perfin J94 “JRV” that occurs only on newspaper stamps, and perfin Z8 “ZP” and Variation 2 (anchor) which we only know at this time on revenue stamps -- with these the price is stated directly in the perfin catalog (and thus without any further surcharge). [*Here the J94 “JRV” and Z8 “ZP” are references to the system used in the standard perfin catalog to designate a specific perfin. The perfins are organized alphabetically. Then within each letter consecutively, again alphabetically. Under the system, J94 “JRV” means that the 94th perfin shown under the J’s contains the perforated letters JRV.*]

Perfins are found very rarely on the common values of the 1939 Czechoslovak overprinted issues [Sc. 1-19], on stamps with coupons, or on Pof. 122 [Sc. 90](the 4.20h **AH**) -- we do not evaluate these cases.

It is necessary to separately evaluate a Pof. 352 (1K TGM)[Sc. 1A] stamp having a perfin, since this occurrence is relatively rare. The standard valuation for one of these is a minimum of 40 Kč regardless of the type of perfin, although in cases where the particular perfin is evaluated higher in the catalog, then of course the price listed there applies.

On rare occasions we can find a Czechoslovak stamp with a perfin that has been used in the Protectorate (this involves forerunner or concurrent stamps). Here a requirement is that the date of the cancel be clearly readable -- the price is 40 Kč regardless of the perfin type.

Postal Stationery with Perfins and their Valuation

With postal stationery, we are usually not content merely with the fact that a stamp having a perfin is on it. We consider it essential that the stationery also shows the user corresponding to the specific perfin applied (the name, usually the address, and sometimes even the field of business or information about its products). Such stationery we classify as identified (abbrev. **IC**)(Fig. 6). Postal stationery with Protectorate perfins are rather rare, and some are even very rare, and possibly have not even been documented. Therefore, we have evaluated only the inexpensive varieties of standard quality stationery having a definitive stamp with a perfin and a readable postal cancel.

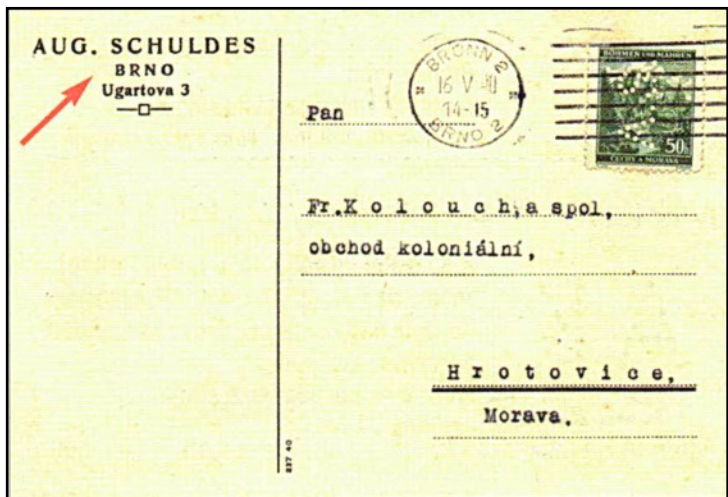


Figure 6: Postcard with a stamp having an “A.S.” Perfin and indicating the user’s name and address making this an “IC”.

Mailed postal stationery that is registered and bears a perfin has a valuation surcharge of +500Kč.

From the remainder of the stationery it is worth mentioning package dispatch clippings. The part with the sender's address was however usually cut off, although there are some exceptions. These were usually used by the perfin's authorized user, and the dispatch cancel corresponds to the company's domicile. Often they also contain several stamps having a higher nominal value. The price of a clipping -- depending on its size -- ranges from 30Kč to 50Kč + the sum of the prices of the stamps used (at least one of which should have a perfin). If the user's identification was preserved on it, the price is 100% higher.

The price of an IC stationery with a Pof. 352 (1K TGM) stamp, or possibly with a Czechoslovak forerunner or concurrent stamp, is a minimum of 500Kč.

Other postal stationery with perfins, but without identification of the authorized user, only has small value corresponding to the price of stationery without a perfin, or possibly the price of a soaked-off perfin stamp + 20%.

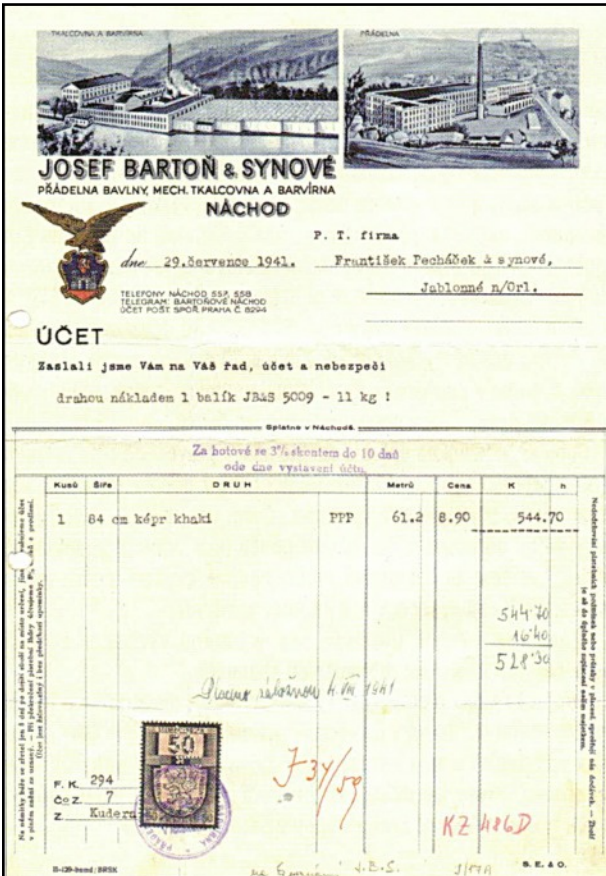


Figure 7: Document bearing a revenue stamp that has a perfin.

Perfins on Revenue Stamps

Soaked-off revenue stamps with perfins are rare. Their cost is a minimum of 100 Kč, if not otherwise specified in a catalog section. We price documents having perforated revenue stamps separately in a catalog section. Some of the documents even have interesting graphic designs, including additional information about the company (see Fig. 7).

Catalog Entry

Catalog entries show pictures of perfins at a 1:1 ratio (laying the perfin on the image, they should align). We show perfins according to the catalog designations that are taken from *Catalog perfinů z území Československa* (Catalog of Perfins of the Czechoslovak Lands). In it the perfins are arranged in alphabetical order by the first letter of the monogram and numbered in that order (every letter has its own numerical series). The period of use of postal




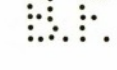
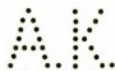



stationery with a perfin is indicated by an abbreviation behind the catalog number (P = Protectorate). The price of the same perfin used in another time period may vary significantly and often is lower.. For completeness, the entries also include a typeface copy of the monogram. In addition, it shows the proven period of time that it was used during the Protectorate, and in brackets is shown the approximate overall time the perfin was used (dates in bold are documented, dates in italics are assumed but not yet documented). Then follows a designation of the issues on which that perfin was found so far -- Pof. 352, L+K, AH, Ost., appropriate others, etc. Other lines give the names of the post offices (in Czech and German) from which the consignments with the perfin were sent, the identity of the users (as it was known in the time of the Protectorate, or perhaps immediately before), and in italics is shown the field of business. If necessary, any additional information is given in a note (in italics).

V. Munzberger contributed significantly to the preparation of this chapter.

Forgeries to the Detriment of Collectors

Like in all other collecting areas and fields, there have been recorded attempts of the counterfeiting of perfins.

Examples of Newly Cataloged Entries (enlarged by 110%)

 <p>A.D. 1939 - 1943 (- 45) [1906 - 1949] známe na Pof. (352), L+K, AH; Milotice nad Bečvou / Milotitz a.d. Betschwa; Družstvo Hospodář, spol. s r.o. / Genossenschaft „Landwirt“, (dříve A. Dadák); <i>továrna na hospodářské stroje</i></p> <p>A12-P (A.D.) 15 300</p>	 <p>BF (1939 -) 1941 - (1943) známe na L+K; Praha / Prag; <i>Pozn: perfin nově vzniklý za protektorátu, uživatel dosud není znám</i></p> <p>B39-P (BF) 40 --</p>
 <p>A.F.N. 1939 [1920 - 1939] známe jen na Pof. (352); Praha / Prag; Antonina Fleissiga nástupce; <i>továrna na motouzy, lana a provaznické výrobky</i></p> <p>A20-P (A.F.N.) 100 --</p>	 <p>B.F. 1939 - (1943) [1929 - 1943] známe na L+K; Praha / Prag; Bratři Feiglové; <i>továrna na krajky, vyšivky, tyly a jiné jemné tkaniny</i></p> <p>B41-P (B.F.) 100 --</p>
 <p>A.K. 1939 - 1943 (- 45) [1926 - 1946] známe na Pof. (352), L+K, AH, přetisku; Kunčice nad Ostravicí / Gross Kunzendorf; Agroferra, akc. spol.; <i>továrna na hospodářské stroje</i></p> <p>A38-P (A.K.) 15 300</p>	 <p>BIB 1939 - 1942 (- 43) [1938 - 1943] známe na Pof. (352), L+K; Praha / Prag; Pneu Michelin, a. s.; <i>továrna na pneumatiky</i></p> <p>B52-P (BIB) 20 500</p>
 <p>A.K. 1939 - 1944 (- 45) [1929 - 1945] známe na Pof. (352), L+K, AH; Náměst nad Oslavou / Namiest a.d. Oslawa; A. Klazar, akc. spol.; <i>továrna na koberce</i></p> <p>A53-P (A.K.) 10 250</p>	 <p>B.J. 1939 - 1945 [1906 - 1946] známe na Pof. (352), L+K, AH; Praha / Prag; Bratři Janouškové; <i>továrna na éterické oleje, trestí a lučebniny</i></p> <p>B53-P (B.J.) 10 250</p>

[This is a translation of the first entry above as a sample, so you can better understand how to “read” it.]

1. On the left is illustrated the monogram of the perfin consisting of holes in the exact size and shape of the original. The idea is that you can take the perforated stamp and lay it over this image, and they should align perfectly.
2. Line 1. A.D. = Typeface copy of the monogram. **1939-1943** = documented dates of use in the Protectorate. (-45) = undocumented date of use in the Protectorate. **[1906-1949]** = documented dates of use.
3. Line 2. “známe na Pof. (352), L+K, AH” = known on stamp Pof. 352 (the 1K TGM stamp), the Linden Leaves and Landscape stamps, the Hitler stamps.
4. Lines 3, 4, 5 = the post offices from which the consignments with the perfin were sent.
5. Line 6. “factory for agricultural machinery”

[Ed. Note: *The Specialist* is pleased to reprint this first English translation of an article from *Filatelie* 7/2012 with the permission of the author and the editor.]



ERRORS AND OMISSIONS

- 1) On page 14 of the Spring 2019 *Specialist* I had given my thanks to **Frederick Lawrence** for help in coordinating our participation in the Society for Hungarian Philately dinner at ARIPEX. As Frederick kindly reminded me, this coordination had in fact been carried out by our member **Randy Frank**. Randy, my abject apologies for leaving you out.
- 2) Again, from the Spring 2019 *Specialist*, this time the lower image on page 13. I should have noted that the two people facing the camera at the nearest table are **Bill Slaninko, and Antigone, wife of Frederick Lawrence**. My humble apologies to you both for this omission.
- 3) Yes, you have guessed it, yet another mistake in the Spring 2019 *Specialist*. On page 40 there is missing text that goes with Fig. 37. The text reads “21. On March 13, 2019 the Ministry issued a prepaid postal card with additional imprint to commemorate the awarding of prizes for **Czech stamps issued during 2018**. The imprinted stamp, featuring a detail of an Alfons Mucha painting, has a value identified by the letter “E”. The additional print, designed by Tomáš Řiha, illustrates the two stamps with details of the awards given to them (Fig. 37). 2700 cards were issued”. Thank you to everyone who pointed out this omission. Oh, I forgot, actually nobody ever did tell me of this mistake. Phew, I got away with that one!

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*If you are a collector/enthusiast of that period when Czechoslovak and Hungarian philately overlaps, as well as the earlier shared postal history, you should consider joining the **Society for Hungarian Philately (SHP)**. Annual membership includes four issues of *The News of Hungarian Philately*, access to member's sections of their website, and participation in their quarterly auction. Annual dues are \$25 for N. America, \$30 Worldwide, or \$20 for online access only. You can join by following the link on the home page of their website, www.hungarianphilately.org, using PayPal (adding \$1 to whichever level you require), or direct to the treasurer, Wes Learned, P.O. Box 802, Powell, WY 82435-0802.*