

How to DRAW Perfins

--by Vojtech Maxa (#933)

Drawing a Perfin seems such an easy job that I hesitated to write about it. But the experience I gained while preparing the drawings of nearly 800 dies for my catalog of the Perfins of Czechoslovakia may prove helpful to other members.

The easiest method of reproducing Perfins seems to be Xerography or photography. It may be helpful if a large number of Perfins is to be reproduced, but sometimes the results are not always satisfactory. This is because Perfins are not always in perfect condition. They may not have clean-cut holes, they may be poorly positioned on the stamp, or they may be upside down or backward in relation to the face of the stamp. And very often Xerox or similar copies tend to be smudgy.

A drawing, a hand reproduction, is often the best way to come up with a good picture of a Perfin--especially if you wish to mount a picture of a die alongside a certain Perfin in your album or if you have to prepare an illustration for an article. It is quick, clean, and it is cheap.

Here's how to do it.

Take a good quality smooth paper and rule a page into squares 25 by 25 or 30 by 30 millimeters. Place your Perfined stamp on the square in such a way that the Perfin is well centered and the correct way up. Then take a very sharp soft lead pencil and mark the holes of the Perfin through the stamp. Take care to fill the whole area of the hole to get the exact size of it on the paper. And that's it. With a little practice, you can do a drawing in about 30 seconds.

If you plan to mount this drawing in your album or use it as an illustration, you will probably want to convert your pencil drawing into an ink drawing. You can use a soft nibbed pen, a felt tip pen, or even a ballpoint. But none of these will give quite the professional appearance you can achieve with a good quality drawing pen.

In the United States, pens such as Rapidograph and Leroy are available in art and stationery shops with points in a variety of sizes. Select a pen that has interchangeable points.

Fill your pen with India ink, hold the pen perpendicular to the paper, touch the pencilled dot, and lift the pen straight up. Do not hold the pen at a slant or the ink will be slightly elongated. A little practice will help you make perfect ink dots. A 0.5 mm size point will do for most of the Perfins you'll illustrate. Larger holes can be covered by moving the pen point in a circular fashion to enlarge the hole size. Smaller holes will require smaller pen points and your local art shop is probably the best source of advice.

May I suggest you try some hand illustrations on your Perfins album pages. With a little practice, you will find the effort to be a small price to pay for a beautiful addition to your album.

Editor's Note: Mr. Maxa is the author of a catalog of the Perfins of Czechoslovakia which has now appeared in an English, Czech, and German edition.