

The Swiss Soldiers Stamps

by

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One wonders how this subject can relate to our hobby!

First of all, what are these stamps? During periods of active service of the Swiss Army (1914-18 and 1940-45), several units published and sold "Soldier's Stamps"; the goal was to create a charitable fund for the benefit of needy soldiers, and very often to replace lost material. It can be remembered that a Swiss soldier of the Second World War was "generously" paid one franc a day. It should also be mentioned that the postal exchange between soldiers and civilians was free. The value of these stamps is not mentioned; however, some are beautifully colored and others are more decorative. I have retained here only the charity stamps for the benefit of the soldiers of the communication units, namely the radio-telegraphers, the telegraph-pioneers and the service of the homing pigeons. (Fig.1)



Fig. 1

By their nature, these stamps are already fascinating, if only for the subjects treated; in studying more closely, we see that some narrate important events in the lives of some of our Swiss our "Old Timer" pioneers, including Dr. Rudolf Stuber HB9T (Fk.Kp.7), Gilbert de Montmollin HB9EQ (Cp. mot.tg.21) and so many others ...

But there is much more interesting. In 1948, under the leadership of the Geneva Group (HB9FF, Henry Besson and HB9CA Pierre Maeder) the USKA (Swiss Union of Shortwave Amateurs) established the famous Helvetia 22 Award; those of us who have the pleasure of owning this framed diploma and adorning their station can admire its artistic value. (Fig 2)



Fig. 2
Fig. 3

Indeed, he represents a 14th century standard-bearer soldier giving thanks to God. By what chance did this flag bearer arrive on our H22?

HB9AW, Gerard de Buren of Geneva, renowned operator, was a printer-publisher by profession and already well known for having published, in 1944, the famous manual HB9AO Robert Luthi, entitled « Radio-Électricité Élémentaire ». Two years ago, when he printed the catalog of Swiss military stamps, he was enthusiastic about a stamp of the "Geb.Inf.Rgt.29.Stabstruppen" representing this famous soldier. This stamp is the work of the artist Richard Schaupp from St. Gallen. (Fig. 3)

And so, when the H22 project was approved, HB9AW provided the layout and printing and chose this flag carrier as motive.

I want to thank especially HB9T and HB9EQ for the valuable information they gave me, especially for the stamp of the Cp.Mot.TG.21; this company was then commanded by Captain de Montmollin (HB9EQ). (Fig.4)



Fig. 4

References:

- 1) Soldatenmarken-als Erinnerung an die Aktivdienste *
H.R.Kurz, V.Massarotti, H.Sulzer
96 pages, 17.5 x 31 cm, 1987
Ott Publishing and Printing AG, Thun.

- 2) Le regard de la mémoire
Henri Besson HB9FF
Published on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the USKA Geneva 1934-1984
A4, ronéo, 155 pages.

- 3) Les timbres militaires suisses- 1939/42 et supplément 1942/45 *
Paul Locher, Spiez et Robert Forestier, Genève.
Imprimerie G. de Buren, Genève 1942
188 pages, 35 pages supplement

- 4) Die Soldatenmarken der Schweiz –1914/18-1939/45
Heinrich Sulser
4622 Egerkingen
1980, 358 pages + 60 pages of illustrations.

* Both books can be consulted at the Swiss National Library in Bern.