

# Operation Anthropoid

by Stephen Patrick

When Bob Fisher and I attended the APS Stamp Show in Columbus, Ohio, in 2011, we were privileged to hear an excellent presentation by Phil Rhoads on the stamps dedicated to the memory of Lidice, Czechoslovakia. He had prepared an eight frame gold medal winning exhibit on The Murder of Lidice. The village was leveled to the ground and all the men were executed in revenge of the assassination of Reinhardt Heydrich [stamp to the right].



Heydrich was the third highest Nazi and had been tasked by Hitler to bring Czech resistance to its knees. He was both ruthless and considered one of the main architects of the Holocaust. Among his nicknames was the *Butcher of Prague*. On May 27, 1942, two Czech soldiers named Jozif Gabcik and Jan Kubis who had been parachuted into Czechoslovakia were able to toss a bomb under Heydrich's open convertible. The *Blond Beast* died a week later from his wounds.

The Czech village of Lidice was falsely named by the Nazis as the home of one of the assassins, and on order of Hitler, 199 men from the village were rounded up and executed. One hundred and ninety five women were sent to Ravensbruck. Of the 95 children, 85 were gassed at Chelmo, and some were taken to Germany and adopted. At the end of the war only a few came home to the village that was rebuilt nearby. A second accused village of Ležáky was completely wiped out and all occupants killed.

Soon after the news of the destruction of the village of Lidice, the Writer's War Board asked Edna St. Vincent Millay to write a poem to keep the memory alive of the town. She produced a long, dramatic narrative poem called *The Murder in Lidice*. The last stanza starts: "Careless America, crooning a tune! Catch him! Catch him and stop him soon! Never let him come here!" a reference to Hitler.

There is a new movie released August 12 called *Anthropoid* that tells a mostly true version of the story. It includes a love story, intrigue, and a pitched battle inside a church that led to the death of seven Czech parachutists that had dropped into the country. It is very well done but rated R for violence.



The communist Czech government issued many stamps [group of five stamps to right] every five years starting in 1947 to commemorate Lidice. In 1946 Karel Curda, the informer who helped the Nazis hunt down the assassins was tried and executed after living several years on his million mark reward. Questions still remain whether such an operation that resulted in the reprisal deaths of about 5,000 Czechs should have ever been ordered by the Beneš government in exile in London. WWII buffs may want to watch the movie and do further research to decide whether the operation was justified.



If you would like to enjoy the exhibit *The Murder of Lidice*, go on line and Google the title and add the words American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors. Rhoads had actually travelled to Lidice and had contacted one of the survivors. His presentation of the stamps and the story were powerful, just as powerful as the Hollywood attempt to re-tell the story that caused the massacre.

## Addendum by Robert Fisher:

While attending Czech language classes at the Defense Language Institute at Monterey California, one of my instructors was a quiet elderly gentleman, Mr. Šeda. I learned that he and his family had sheltered some of the assassination team members for a short time. He and his family were later arrested by the Gestapo. He and his wife were sent to Auschwitz concentration camp where his wife died in the gas chambers. His twin daughters

were used by SS Dr. Mengele for experiments on twins. They died at the concentration camp. Mr. Šeda was rescued when the camp was captured by allied forces.

**Editor's Note:** Much more on this subject can be found on the web. This link in particular gives a great deal of background information.

[http://www.malariastamps.com/exhibits/exhibits\\_images/\\_TheMurderOfLidice/23.jpg](http://www.malariastamps.com/exhibits/exhibits_images/_TheMurderOfLidice/23.jpg)

## In Memory of Stuart Bernstein

I will always have nothing but admiration and appreciation for Stuart. I will get to the reasons shortly. Stuart joined the Central Florida Stamp Club in the middle of 2006. When his health allowed he would attend meetings and shows – and always was quick with a smile and a greeting. The last meeting of the CFSC that he attended was in the middle of May.

Quoting from his obituary “Stuart passed away Wednesday, August 10, surrounded by his family. He was 83. ‘All my dreams came true,’ Stuart said again and again, referencing his 58-year marriage to his wife, Ruth, their family and, in his words, that he had been a ‘good doctor.’ Stuart said, ‘I have no regrets.’ A kind and generous person who cared deeply for his family and friends, Stuart loved cracking jokes, listening to classical music, and sneaking in an extra dessert. After retiring from his Orlando psychiatric practice in 1998, he was committed to local political and social causes, working on behalf of the ACLU, the Adult Literacy League and the Florida Trail Association. He was especially proud of his volunteer work supporting Barack Obama.”



Stuart's involvement with the CFSC could not have happened at a more fortuitist time. In the Spring of 2006, the monthly newsletter for the membership of the CFSC was relaunched after many years of occasional issues. Since I had “volunteered” to handle the monthly endeavor – I become the Editor. Quickly it became obvious that I had no clue where to get material to publish – as can be witnessed by looking at the first half-dozen issues. After making a plea (read begging on bended knee) at one of the meetings -- for members to provide material to support the newsletter, Stuart sought me out and quietly told me that I could expect to receive a short piece from him for every issue. True to his word, Stuart did exactly that. His support and commitment meant a great deal to me at the time – as trying to define and hone a ‘new’ publication is not any easy task. The monthly newsletter now called the *Philatelic Missive* credits its existence to those early writers like Stuart who helped beyond measure.

Rest in peace, Stuart – You will always be remembered with fondness and appreciation.

[submitted by the Editor]