



Swedish Postal Uniforms in the Early 20th Century

The Swedish Post Office when under many uniform changes between the 19th and 20th Century. This one page exhibit attempts to portray those changes through philatelic and open philatelic means.

In 1817 the tailcoat is introduced as uniform for employees of higher rank. Dark blue broadcloth (fine wool) with gold trim. (A)

In 1866 the tailcoat became a full dress uniform only to be worn on special occasions. Instead of the tailcoats a uniform for everyday use was introduced - a "släpuniform".

The uniform was similar to the one used in the Swedish State Railway. To avoid confusion between the train employees and the postal employees working on the train, the postal everyday uniform was equipped with a square loop embroidered in gold thread, so called gold braid, on the sleeves. The gold braid was of different width depending on rank. (B)

The "släpuniform" was compulsory to wear for "postbetjänte" = lower ranks (rural postmen, ordinary postmen and railway postmen). In 1893 came a new dress regulation which was very detailed.



Watercolour of a Swedish postman in 1903
(shown at -50%)



Telegraph postcard dated on the
reverse 1919 (shown at -45%)

The numerical symbols on the collar were introduced in 1903. (C) Since the numbers were individual the general public could identify a postman easily. The numbers were disliked by the postmen. This was the peak of taking pride in carrying a uniform and they wanted to be looked upon as a strong, proud collective not as single individuals. It was also seen upon as a class mark. The protests were so vehement that the number system was abolished in 1917.

In 1914 the braid on the sleeve was replaced by braided epaulettes and embroidered cap badges. (D) Depending on rank the epaulettes had one, two or three small post horns. The large number of published regulations about uniforms in the first decades of the twentieth century shows that the number of hierarchical levels increased steadily. A peak was reached in the 1931 dress regulations.

A postman's cap with two golden braids is also a sign of rank. (E)

In 1903 the cap and pants were supposed to last for 1 year. The coat for 3 years. (F)



Test print created in 1983 in connection with the inauguration of PFA's new printing press on June 14, 1983. The press is manufactured by Maschinenfabrik GOEBEL GmbH in Darmstadt for three-color steel printing and four-color offset (shown at +15%)