

Dr. Václav Vojtěch - the first Czech in Antarctica

The purpose of this exhibit is to document from the beginning the postal correspondence of the first Czechoslovak participant in the polar Antarctic expedition. Starting from his departure to Antarctica and his very important first steps as a participant of the first Byrd Antarctic Expedition 1929-30. I wanted to establish that despite the adversity and the first rejection by R. E. Byrd, Vojtěch did not let himself be discouraged and finally took part in this expedition. His desire was not to go there as a stoker, steward and sailor to the position of musician. Unfortunately, this expedition did not allow him to explore the Antarctic region as he would have liked.

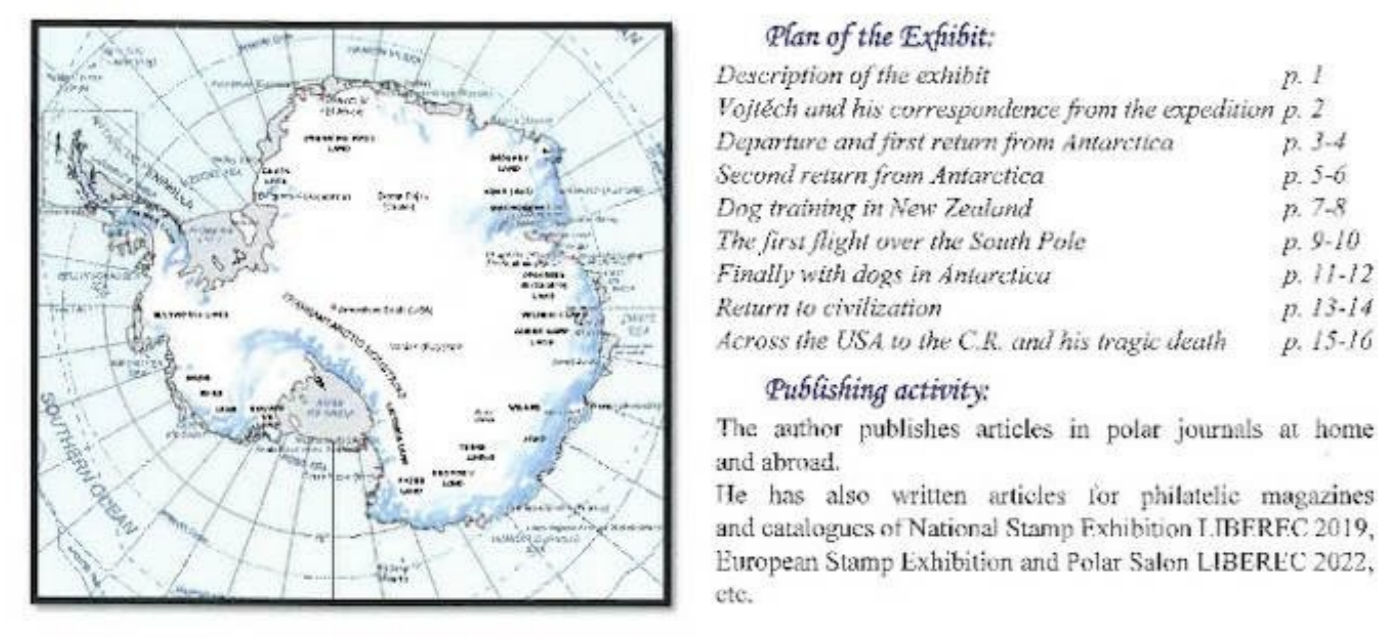
Historical background of the exhibit:
The mysterious "Terra australis incognita", an "Unknown Southern Land", has attracted sailors and explorers since ancient times. They had been venturing to approach this continent for hundreds of years by exploring areas around Antarctica, but it was not until the early 19th century that sailors were able to get close enough to actually discover it. Then expeditions began explorations. First around and off the coast of Antarctica, and then they went inland to better understand the weather and living conditions in Antarctica. It was exciting and often dangerous for scientists and explorers to make new geographical explorations. Gradually, they learnt more and more about the area, until the conquest of the South Pole, which completed the greatest goal of polar expeditions in the early 20th century. Our polar explorers were only pioneers in this respect, but their diligence and extraordinary interest in the area brought them not only success but also the admiration of other expedition members.

Significance of the exhibit:
This exhibit summarizes the course of activities of the first Czechoslovak polar explorer in Antarctica. Related to this there is its postal documentation, which have been preserved in only a few pieces and is now almost unavailable.

Exhibitory exhibit items:
The material from Dr. Václav Vojtěch, who was a participant in the first Byrd Antarctic Expedition, contains a large part of the items that represent most of the genesis in Czechoslovak polar postal history.

Personal research and used literature:
The focus of my own research is primarily on determining and confirming the date of mail sent in the Antarctic region from the individual dispatch sections listed on the correspondence, as well as whether the postal rate is appropriate for the period and the information is mainly derived from foreign literature, journals and polar themes published by polar clubs in England, USA, Czech Republic, etc. Another equally important aspect is the cooperation with domestic polar collectors. Among the books I have used I would mention for example: *Vojtěch, národním a pověstím za zimní polarisim brátem* - Dr. Václav Vojtěch *Bílá pevnina (Hvězdná polárníková vesměla) - Stanislav Bělík*

Map of Antarctica and some stations located on it



NOTE: Scanned and photocopied auxiliary images (maps, postcards, stamps, etc.) are from publicly available sources and are only for illustrative or decorative purposes.

Vojtěch and his correspondence from the expedition



Dr. Václav Vojtěch, a participant in the first Byrd Antarctic Expedition 1929-1930, who on 27th January 1929 was the first Czech to reach 78°30' S, and 63°53' W, in Antarctica. The philatelic significance of Dr. Vojtěch is that he sent a number of letters to our homeland during the expedition, which today among our polar collectors. He sent letters from aboard the Flagship City of New York and from New Zealand. Most of the letters bear the Byrd Expedition letterhead and were accompanied by the expedition's stamps (cachets). Dr. Vojtěch was very fond of using forms intended for the radiograms of Byrd's polar expedition. The addition of various stamps and cachets to the envelopes has expanded a lot since the time of these expeditions. They teach technical perfection and make polar collecting much more interesting. However, the cachets from R. E. Byrd's expeditions are unmissable in capturing the unique atmosphere and thus the appearance of the letters in the eyes of philatelists is duly enclosed. In the wide circle of addressees to whom Dr. Vojtěch diligently wrote, we find especially the names of our industrialists and politicians of the time (T. G. Masaryk, Haas), who by their financial support enabled Dr. Vojtěch to participate in the expedition.

Photo of Dr. Václav Vojtěch in Antarctic Clothing
Used postcard made in 1930, mailed on 10th February 1934, with the portrait of the commander of the Antarctic expedition R. E. Byrd, sent to Dr. Brown, New York, USA. On the postcard were used 2x3 stamps from the souvenir sheet issued for the 11 Byrd Antarctic Expedition.



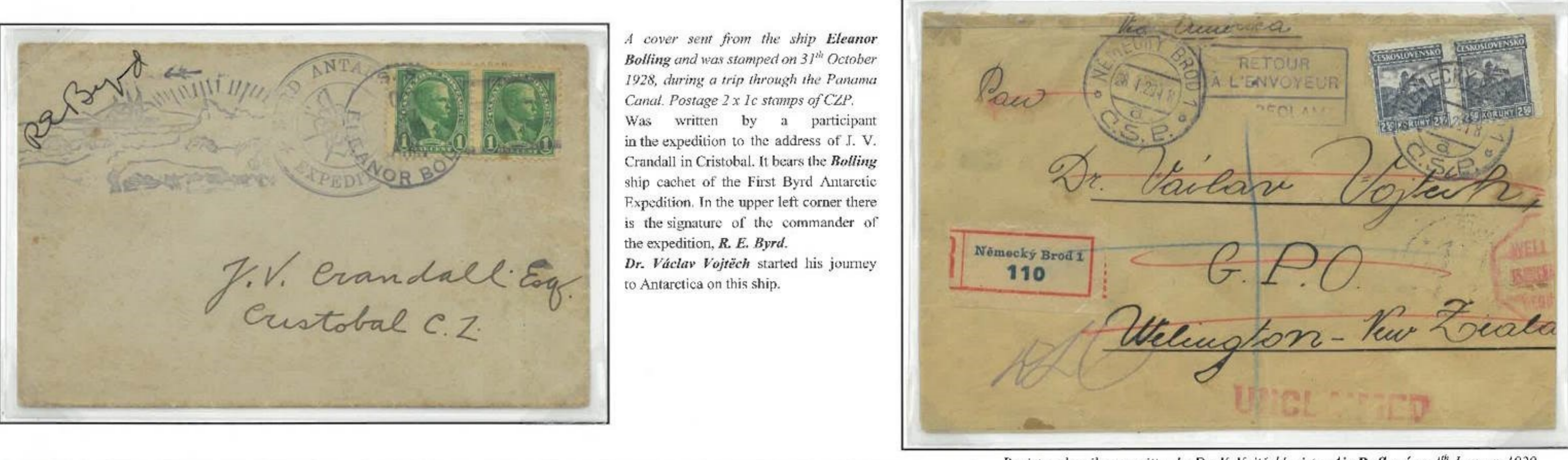
Unusual postcard with a picture of Dr. Václav Vojtěch
In polar clothing, with his signature. Made in the Mléz studio, Staroměstské nám. 20, Prague 1. Most of Dr. Vojtěch's postcards, which he distributed at his lectures, come from this studio.



Photo of R. E. Byrd in Antarctic Clothing

Departure and first return from Antarctica

Dr. Václav Vojtěch started his overland trip in New Zealand in 1928 with a dramatic meeting with R. E. Byrd, whom he came to with a request to be accepted as a member of the expedition (5000 Americans were interested). On 6th December 1928 Dr. Vojtěch leaves the port of Dunedin in New Zealand as a stoker on the *Eleanor Balling*, originally named *Chelsea*, but renamed by Byrd. On 10th December 1928, *Eleanor Balling* crosses the Antarctic Circle and Dr. Vojtěch sees Scott Island at 78° S. Here, the ship's voyage ends with the transshipment of material to the Flagship City of New York (this ship was recommended to Byrd by R. Amundsen himself, when it was named *Sansonek*). After the transshipment was completed, Dr. Vojtěch returned to New Zealand and the Flagship City of New York sails on to Bay of Whales. On 20th December 1928, *Eleanor Balling* lands at Port Chalmers, New Zealand. Dr. Vojtěch sends his first letters. In his book "Stoker, Sailor and Musician in the Southern Antarctic Circle" he states that he sent his last letters by post on 13th January 1929 and on 14th January 1929 *Eleanor Balling* leaves Dunedin for her second voyage, again with Dr. Vojtěch on board.



Registered mail was written by Dr. Vojtěch's sister Aja Duřáková
On 1st January 1929 from New York (Brooklyn) to Wellington (main post office) N. Z., postage 2 x 20 hal., it was the rate from C.R. to N.Z. Sent via USA. Receipt octagonal postmark 5.7. Wellington-Registered. The red stamp at the bottom UNCLAIMED - not collected and the stamp in the middle at the top RE TOUR A L'ENVOYEUR - returned to sender documents that Dr. Václav Vojtěch unfortunately did not receive. The letter was returned to the sender in the Czech Republic.

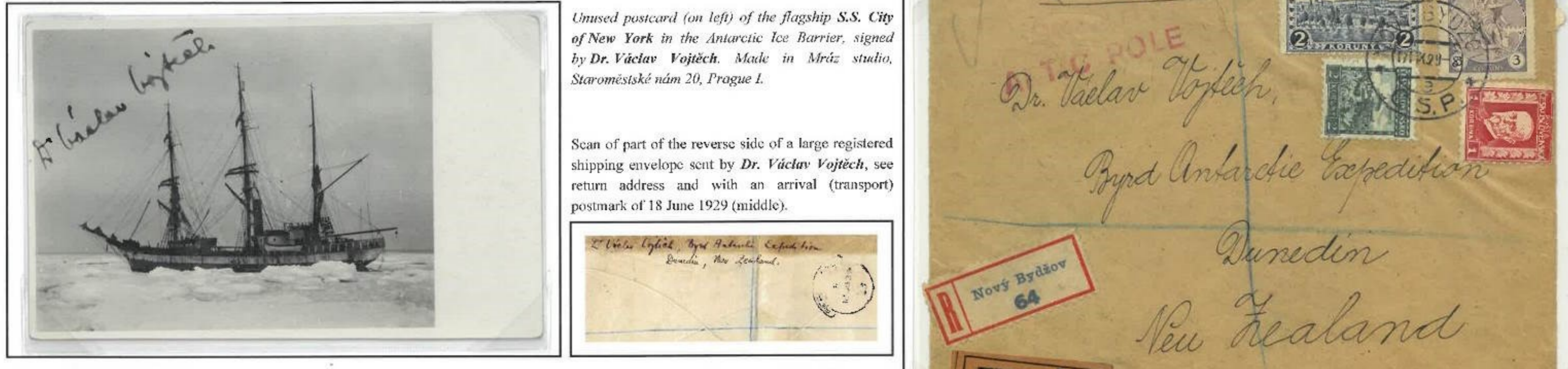


Scan of reverse side of registered mail from Dr. Václav Vojtěch's sister
See her return address with outgoing purple oval postmark 22.7.1929 Registered Wellington and transport registered oval postmark 2.11.1929 NEW YORK.

Dr. Václav Vojtěch sent an official large expedition cover to his father František Vojtěch
in Škřivany, via the post office in Nový Bydovc. The letter was stamped on 14th January 1929 in Dunedin. (Stamps 1/2 and 2 NZ pence used). This was on the day of the *Eleanor Balling's* second departure for Antarctica. A cover containing *Balling's* cachets of the first Byrd Antarctic Expedition.

Initial Antarctic Arrival and return to Winter in NZ

On 27 January 1929 *Eleanor Balling* entered Bay of Whales at 73° S.L. and 163° 53' E.L. The same day Dr. Vojtěch ascended the Ross Ice Barrier. It was his first steps in Antarctica. On 22 February 1929 he was transferred to the crew of the ship City of New York, on which he holds the position of steward and returns with this ship to New Zealand. City of New York docked at Port Chalmers on 16 March 1929.



Registered expedition envelope on expedition stationery sent by Dr. Václav Vojtěch to Mr. Zdeněk Duřák
in Náměštlá Březá. It was postmarked on 20 May 1929 in Port Chalmers (5 1/2 NZ pence stamps used, corresponding to the registered, surface rate) and was completed with another of the cachets from the first Byrd Antarctic Expedition (these were used on the letters that flew over the South Pole). Transported to the Czech Republic via San Francisco on the S.S. Tahiti, part of the New Zealand Shipping Co.



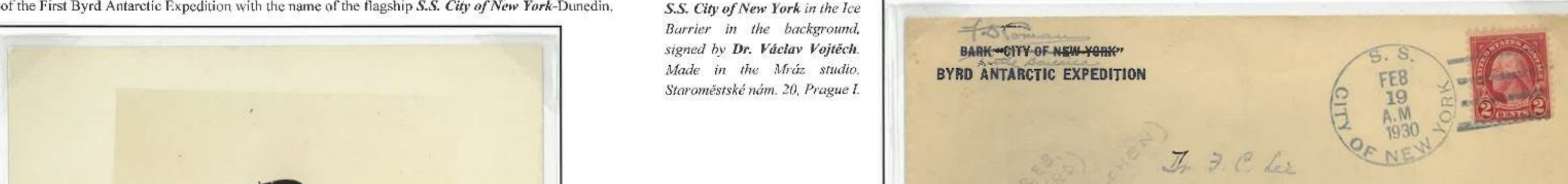
Dr. Vojtěch's mother posts from Nový Bydovc
17 September 1929 a registered EXPRESS mail envelope (rated at 10,- CZK) for her son on the expedition, enabling return to Antarctica in Dunedin, N.Z. Sent via USA.

On his second return to New Zealand, Dr. Vojtěch went to the New Zealand Alps
to learn how to master dog sledding. On 21 October 1929, the Flagship City of New York prepared for her next voyage to Antarctica and it was not until 5 January 1930 that conditions in the South were such that the City of New York could sail. *Eleanor Balling* returned shortly after departure, because the ice pack was insurmountable.



On the unused postcard is Dr. Václav Vojtěch
standing on a sledge while training Alaskan polar dogs in the New Zealand Alps (August-September 1929) for the needs of the first Byrd Antarctic Expedition. Postcard published by Hugh & G.K. Nell Limited, Dunedin, New Zealand.

Registered large expedition cover sent by Dr. Václav Vojtěch to Mr. J. Růžek Otávkový
Mayor of the Scout Association in Prague. It was stamped on 18 November 1929 in Dunedin. (Stamps used 1/2 + 5 NZ pence) and was completed with another of the cachets from the first Byrd Antarctic Expedition (these were used on the mail that flew over the South Pole). The letter was written at the time of Dr. Vojtěch's second return from Antarctica, while still in New Zealand, before his next planned departure to Antarctica.

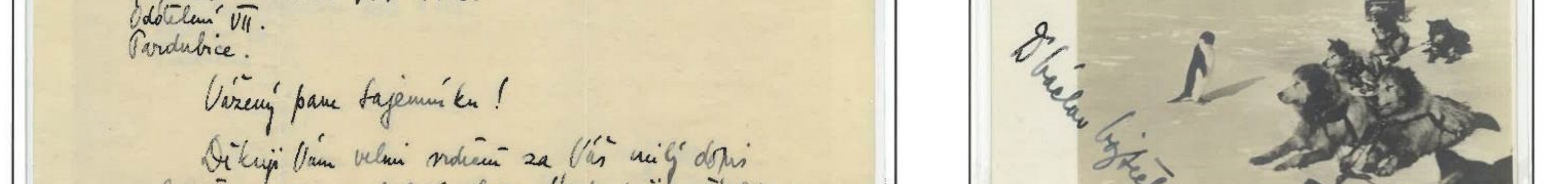


On 18 February 1930, the City of New York broke through the ice into Bay of Whales
Here she was eagerly awaited by an expedition which, among other things, had already reached the South Pole by air. During the voyage, Dr. Vojtěch also worked as a bellman. The embarkation of the team was carried out in a hurry. Dr. Vojtěch took advantage of a single day and made a trip to the Little America station with a dog sled he had trained himself. The City of New York then immediately sailed back from Antarctica.

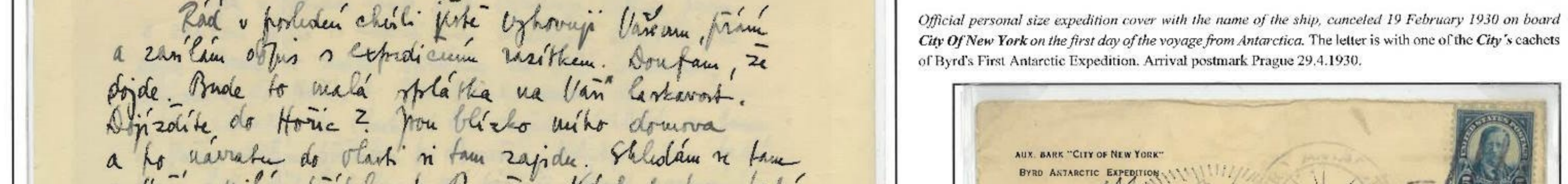
Unusual postcard with photograph of Antarctic station Little America
in the left chimney, in the middle the roof and the exit from the building and on the right the radio tower. Below is the signature of Dr. Václav Vojtěch.



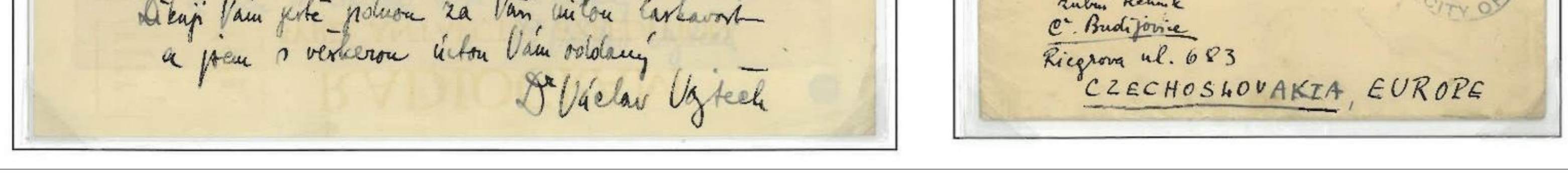
Small expedition cover type I, sent by Dr. Václav Vojtěch to Mr. František Uhlir in Larchmont
The letter was stamped on 16 November 1929 in Dunedin, New Zealand. Used stamps 2x 20 NZ pence. Written at the time of the return of part of the expedition from the Hermitage area and preparation for the next trip to Antarctica. On the reverse of cover, in addition to Dr. Vojtěch's return address to New Zealand, is a special cachet of the first Byrd Antarctic Expedition with the name of the flagship S.S. City of New York-Dunedin.



Unusual postcard of a penguin standing in Antarctica
with the silhouette of the flagship S.S. City of New York in the background, signed by Dr. Václav Vojtěch. Made in the Mléz studio, Staroměstské nám. 20, Prague 1.



Unusual postcard of the second aircraft
a Fairchild FC-2H2, which Byrd used for research flights in Antarctica. It was named Stars and Stripes. Photographed at Little America Base in Antarctica. It is from the PE series of the Wharfedale catalog, from Byrd's first expedition.



Return to civilization

During the period between 20-28 February 1930, Dr. Vojtěch left the ship City of New York at 69° 30' S, and 179° E and was boarding the whaling ship *Larsen*. He is accompanied by his favorite polar dog York from his sled dog team, whom he later took to his hometown Škřivany.

Unusual postcard by Dr. Václav Vojtěch of Alaskan polar dogs
while relaxing during their journey to Little America station as part of the station's relocation from Antarctica. Signature of Dr. Václav Vojtěch on the left. Made in Mléz studio, Staroměstské nám. 20, Prague 1.



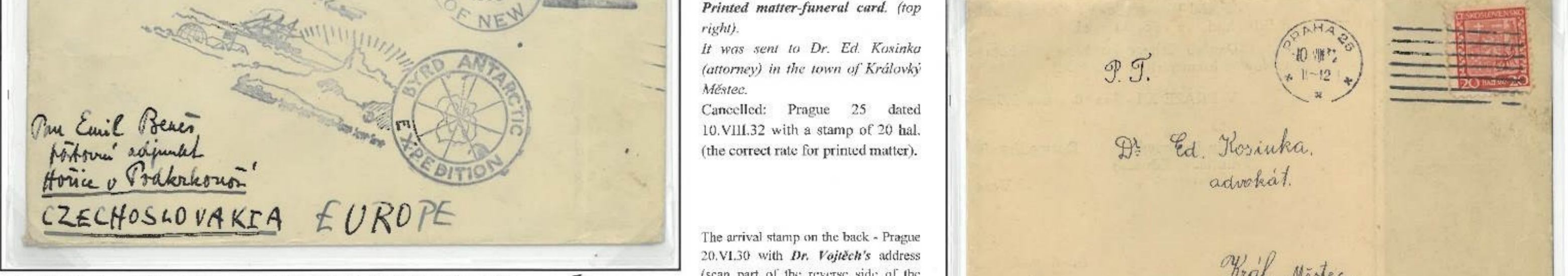
Letter sent by Dr. Václav Vojtěch to Mr. Josef Vlna
The letter was written on official expedition's radiogram form on 15 March 1930, when he was already sailing on the ship *Larsen* (left).

Official personal size expedition cover with the name of the ship
cancelled 19 February 1930 on board City of New York on the first day of the voyage from Antarctica. The letter is with one of the City's cachets of Byrd's first Antarctic Expedition. Arrival postmark Prague 29.4.1930.



Across the USA to the Czechoslovakia, and a tragic death

On the 24 April 1930, *Larsen* arrived in New York where the expedition mail was unloaded. In June 1930, the Byrd expedition successfully landed the Flagship City of New York in New York. Dr. Vojtěch meets R. E. Byrd again and was honored with the *United States Congressional Gold Medal*. Dr. Vojtěch's return to his native country is triumphant, for he returned as a successful polar explorer. The next years of his life were filled with lectures. He was busy with more work, this time an independent expedition to the North. Unfortunately, all his plans were brought to an end by his tragic death on the Elk River in the spa town of Sádka on 6 August 1932.

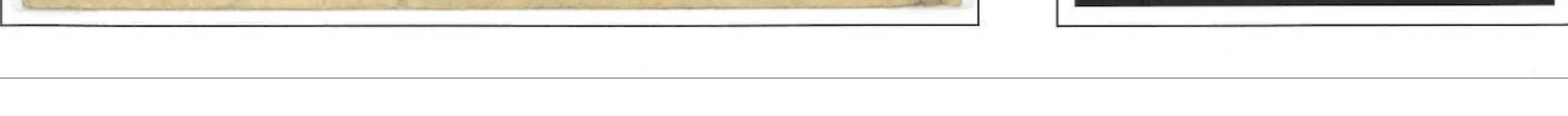


Printed matter-funeral card (top right)
It was sent to Dr. Ed. Kozubka (attorney in the town of Králupy) Město. Canceled: Prague 25 dated 10.VIII.32 with a stamp of 20 hal. (the correct rate for printed matter).

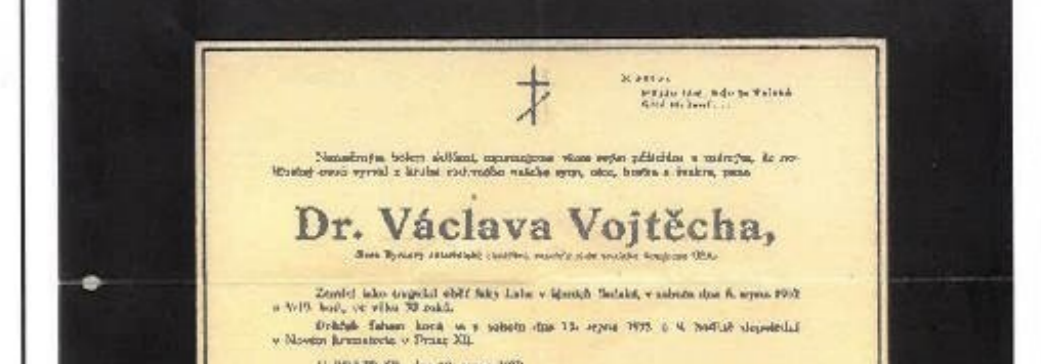
The arrival stamp on the back - Prague
20.VIII.32 with Dr. Vojtěch's address (seen part of the reverse side of the cover)



Official business size expedition cover
was postmarked on 3 May 1930 at the New York Central Post Office. The letter was sent to Dr. Vojtěch after the return of the expedition from Antarctica to the USA to the address where he was staying. Correct rate of postage 2c.

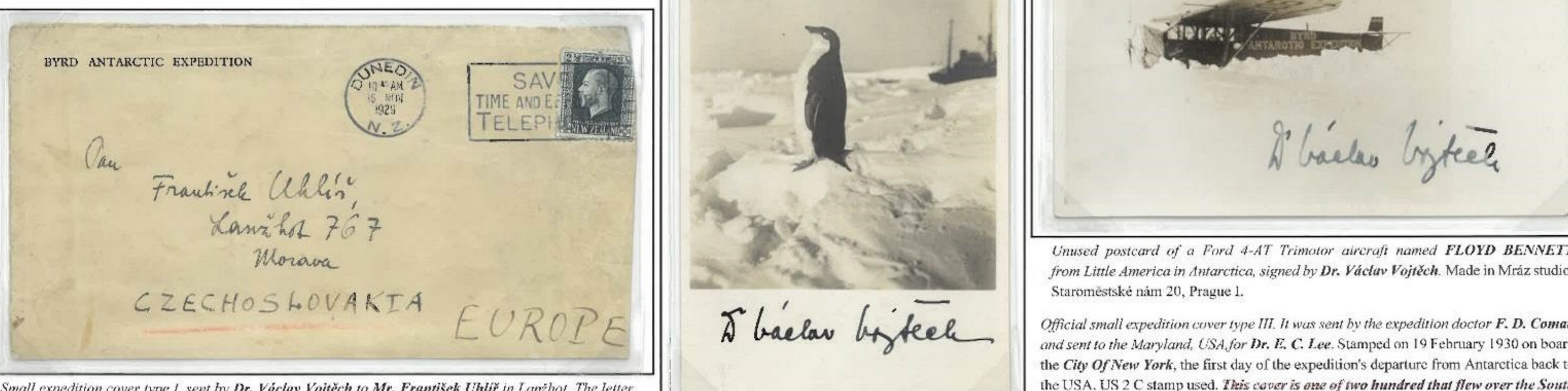


Scan of Dr. Václav Vojtěch funeral card

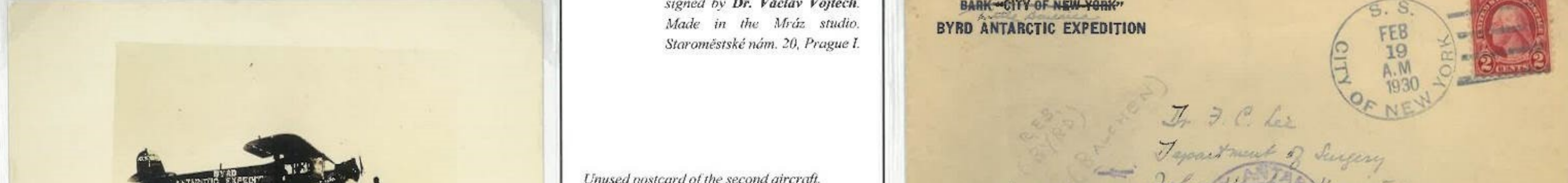


The first flight over the South Pole

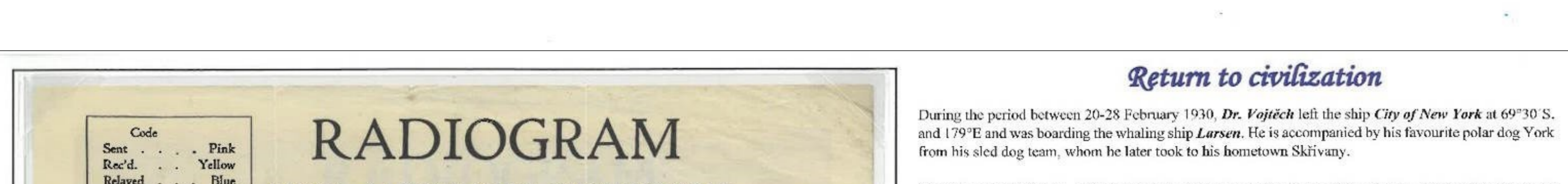
While Dr. Vojtěch and his group were preparing to leave New Zealand for Antarctica, R. E. Byrd and his group took off from Little America on 28 November 1929 in a Ford 4-AT Trimotor aircraft, named *FLOYD BENNETT*, for the historic first flight over the South Pole. R. E. Byrd as navigator, *Berni Bales* as chief pilot, *Harold Gatty* as co-pilot and radio operator, and *Ashley McKinley* as flight photographer. Shortly after midnight on 29 November 1929, *FLOYD BENNETT* flew over the South Pole. They landed back at Little America Station on the morning of 29 November. The flight lasted 18 hours and 41 minutes.



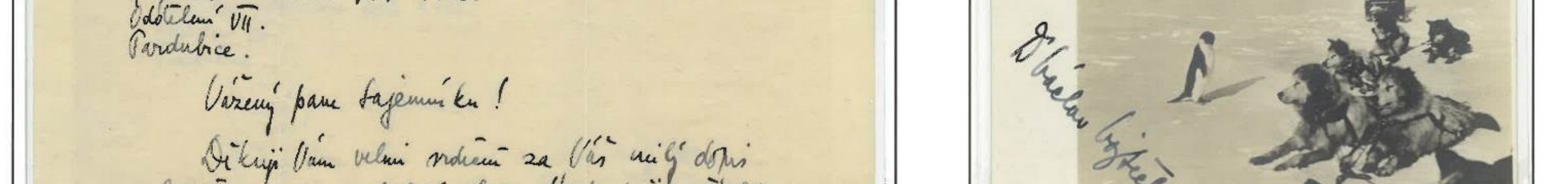
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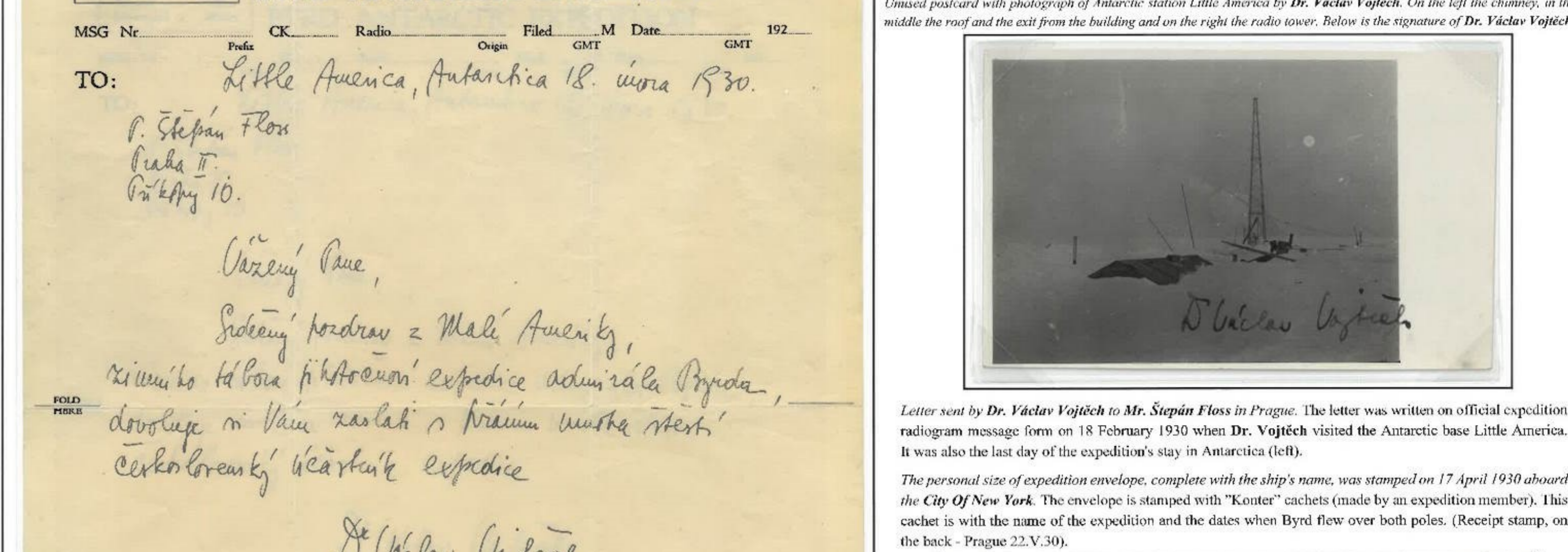
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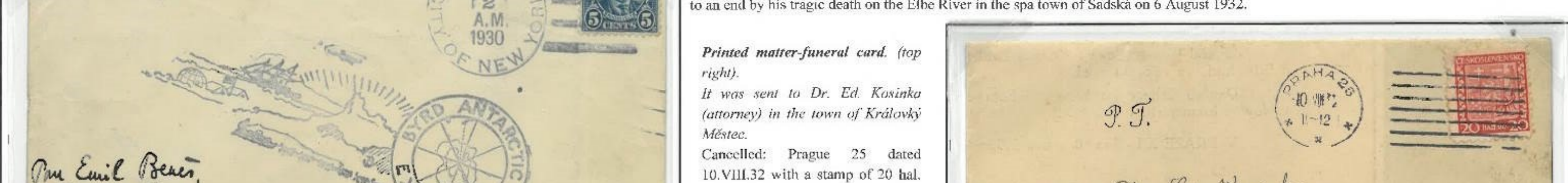
RADIOGRAM



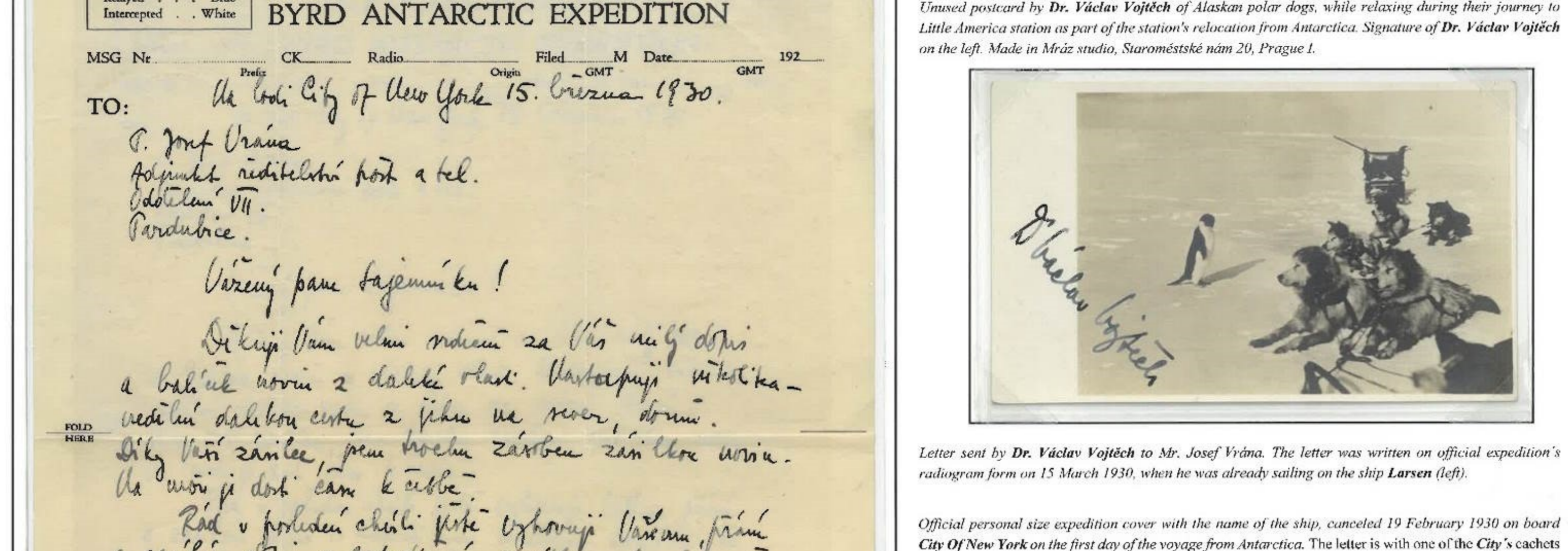
Letter sent by Dr. Václav Vojtěch to Mr. Štěpán Floss in Prague
The letter was written on official expedition radiogram message form on 18 February 1930 when Dr. Vojtěch visited the Antarctic base Little America. It was also the last day of the expedition's stay in Antarctica (left).



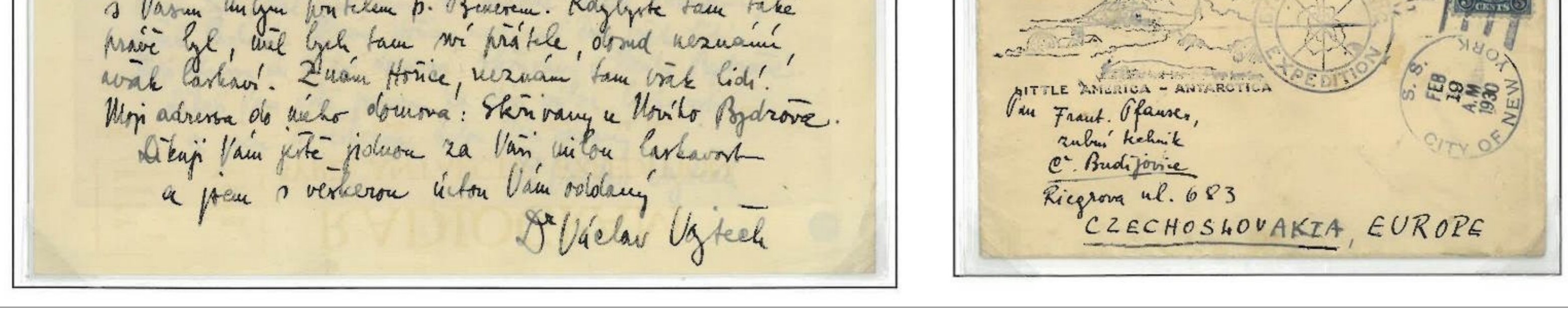
The personal size of expedition envelope
complete with the ship's name, was stamped on 17 April 1930 aboard the City of New York. The envelope is stamped with "Kouter" cachets (made by an expedition member). This cachet is with the name of the expedition and the dates when Byrd flew over both poles. (Receipt stamp, on the back - Prague 23.V.30.)



RADIOGRAM



Letter sent by Dr. Václav Vojtěch to Mr. Josef Vlna
The letter was written on official expedition's radiogram form on 15 March 1930, when he was already sailing on the ship *Larsen* (left).



Dr. Václav Vojtěch - the first Czech in Antarctica

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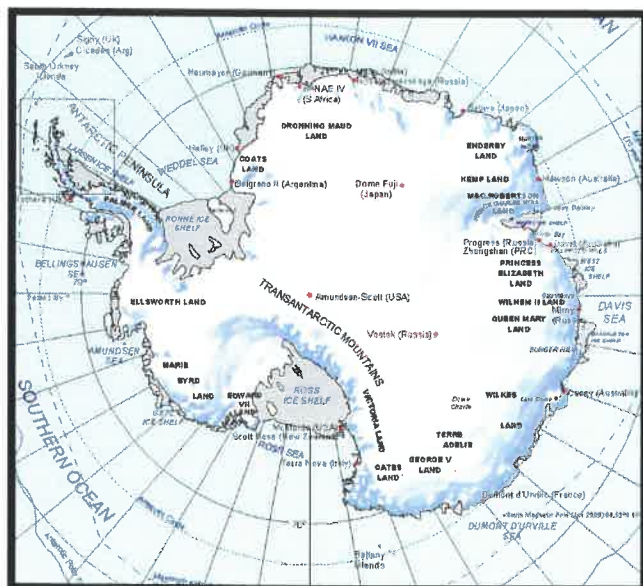
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Topičem, námořníkem a psovodem za jižním polárním kruhem - Dr. Václav Vojtěch

Bílá pevnina (Hledání posledního světadilu) - Stanislav Bártil

Map of Antarctica and some stations located on it



Plan of the Exhibit:

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The first flight over the South Pole	p. 9-10
Finally with dogs in Antarctica	p. 11-12
Return to civilization	p. 13-14
Across the USA to the C.R. and his tragic death	p. 15-16

Publishing activity:

The author publishes articles in polar journals at home and abroad.

He has also written articles for philatelic magazines and catalogues of National Stamp Exhibition LIBEREC 2019, European Stamp Exhibition and Polar Salon LIBEREC 2022, etc.

Vojtěch and his correspondence from the expedition



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Photo of Dr. Václav Vojtěch in Antarctic Clothing



Unused postcard with a picture of **Dr. Václav Vojtěch** in polar clothing with his signature. Made in the Mráz studio, *Staroměstské nám 20, Prague I*. Most of **Dr. Vojtěch's** postcards, which he distributed at his lectures, come from this studio.

Used postcard made in 1930, mailed on 10th February 1934, with the portrait of the commander of the Antarctic expedition **R. E. Byrd**, sent to **Dr. Brown, New York, USA**. On the postcard were used 2x 3c stamps from the souvenir sheet issued for the II Byrd Antarctic Expedition.



Photo of R. E. Byrd in Antarctic Clothing

(NOTE: Scanned and photocopied ancillary images [maps, portraits, paintings, etc.] are from publicly sharable sources and are only for illustrative or decorative purposes).

Departure and first return from Antarctica

Dr. Václav Vojtěch started his overseas trip in New Zealand in 1928 with a dramatic meeting with **R.E. Byrd**, whom he came to with a request to be accepted as a member of the expedition (5000 Americans were interested). On 6th December 1928 **Dr. Vojtěch** leaves the port of Dunedin in New Zealand as a stoker on the **Eleanor Bolling**, originally named **Chelsea**, but renamed by **Byrd**. On 10th December 1928, **Eleanor Bolling** crosses the Antarctic Circle and **Dr. Vojtěch** sees Scott Island at 78°S. L. Here, the ship's voyage ends with the transshipment of material to the flagship **City of New York** (this ship was recommended to **Byrd** by **R. Amundsen** himself, when it was a named **Samson**). After the transshipment was completed, **Dr. Vojtěch** returned to New Zealand and the flagship **City of New York** sails on to Bay of Whales. On 20th December 1928, **Eleanor Bolling** lands at Port Chalmers, New Zealand. **Dr. Vojtěch** sends his first letters. In his book "Stoker, Sailor and Musher in the Southern Antarctic Circle" he states that he sent his last letters by post on 13th January 1929 and on 14th January 1929 **Eleanor Bolling** leaves Dunedin for her second voyage, again with **Dr. Vojtěch** on board.



A cover sent from the ship **Eleanor Bolling** and was stamped on 31th October 1928, during a trip through the Panama Canal. Postage 2 x 1c stamps of CZP.

Was written by a participant in the expedition to the address of J. V. Crandall in Cristobal. It bears the **Bolling** ship cachet of the First Byrd Antarctic Expedition. In the upper left corner there is the signature of the commander of the expedition, **R. E. Byrd**.

Dr. Václav Vojtěch started his journey to Antarctica on this ship.



Registered mail was written by **Dr. V. Vojtěch's** sister **Aja Dufková** on 1th January 1929 from **Německý Brod** (today's **Havlíčkův Brod**) to **Wellington** (main post office) **N. Z.**, postage 2 x 20 hal., it was the rate from **C.R.** to **N.Z.** Sent via **USA**. Receipt octagonal postmark 5.7. Wellington-Registered. The red stamp at the bottom **UNCLAIMED** - not collected and the stamp in the middle at the top **RETOUR Á L'ENVOYEUR** - returned to sender documents that **Dr. Václav Vojtěch** unfortunately did not receive. The letter was returned to the sender in the **Czech Republic**.



Scan of reverse side of registered mail from **Dr. Vaclav Vojtech's** sister, see her return address with outgoing purple oval postmark 22.7.1929 Registered Wellington and transport registered oval postmark 2.11.1929. **NEW YORK**.



Dr. Václav Vojtěch sent an official large expedition cover to his father **František Vojtěch** in **Skřivany**, via the post office in **Nový Bydžov**. The letter was stamped on 14th January 1929 in **Dunedin**. (Stamps 1/2 and 2 NZ pence used). This was on the day of the **Eleanor Bolling's** second departure for Antarctica. A cover containing **Bolling's** cachet of the First Byrd Antarctic Expedition.

Initial Antarctic Arrival and return to Winter i NZ

On 27 January 1929 *Eleanor Bolling* entered Bay of Whales at 73° S.L. and 163° 53' E.L. The same day *Dr. Vojtěch* ascended the Ross Ice Barrier. It was his first steps in Antarctica. On 22 February 1929 he was transferred to the crew of the ship *City of New York*, on which he holds the position of steward and returns with this ship to New Zealand. *City of New York* docked at Port Chalmers on 16 March 1929.



Unused postcard (on left) of the flagship *S.S. City of New York* in the Antarctic Ice Barrier, signed by *Dr. Václav Vojtěch*. Made in Mráz studio, Staroměstské nám 20, Prague I.

Scan of part of the reverse side of a large registered shipping envelope sent by *Dr. Václav Vojtěch*, see return address and with an arrival (transport) postmark of 18 June 1929 (middle).



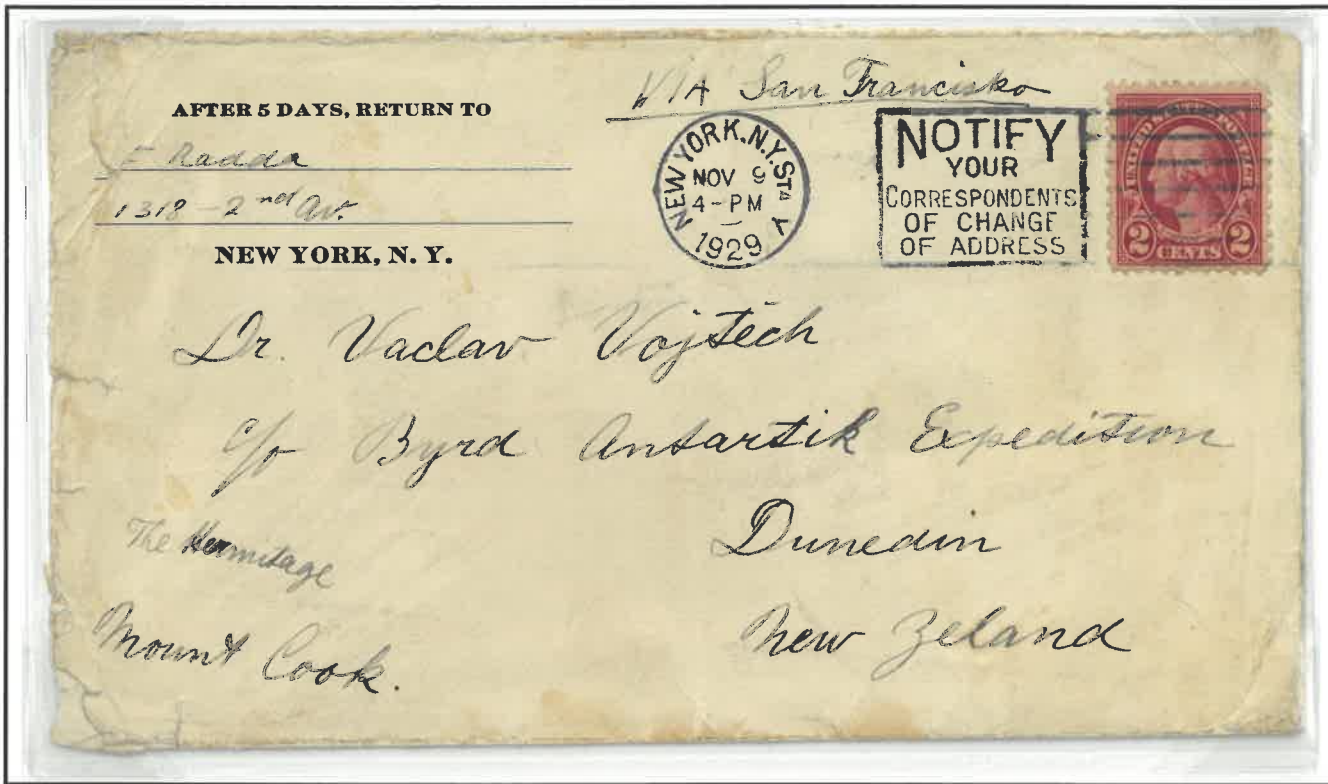
Registered expedition envelope on expedition stationery sent by *Dr. Václav Vojtěch* to *Mr. Zdeněk Dufek* in Německý Brod. It was postmarked on 20 May 1929 in Port Chalmers (5+½ NZ. pence stamps used, corresponding to the registered, surface rate) and was completed with another of the cachets from the First Byrd Antarctic Expedition (these were used on the letters that flew over the South Pole). Transported to the Czech Republic via San Francisco on the *S.S. Tahiti*, part of the *New Zealand Shipping Co.*

Dr. Vojtech's mother posts from Nový Bydžov 17 September 1929 a registered/EXPRESS mail envelope (rated at 10,- CZK) for her son on the expedition, awaiting return to Antarctica in Dunedin, N.Z. Sent via USA.



Scan of the rear of mother's inward registered mail showing additional postage used as an envelope flap sealer.

Dog training in the New Zealand Alps



Cover was written by **F. Radda** from New York, USA on 4 November 1929 (2C US stamp was used), sent via San Francisco to **Dr. Václav Vojtěch** in Dunedin, N.Z. It was routed to the New Zealand Alps to the post office - Hermitage, in the Mount Cook area. Here **Vojtěch** was learning to master a dog sled.

On his second return to New Zealand, **Dr. Vojtěch** went to the New Zealand Alps to learn how to master dog sledding. On 21 October 1929, the flagship *City of New York* prepared for her next voyage to Antarctica and it was not until 5 January 1930 that conditions in the South were such that the *City of New York* could sail. **Eleanor Bolling** returned shortly after departure, because the ice pack was insurmountable.

On the unused postcard is **Dr. Václav Vojtěch** - standing on a sledge while training Alaskan polar dogs in the New Zealand Alps (August-September 1929) for the needs of the First Byrd Antarctic Expedition. Postcard published by Hugh & G.K. Neill Limited, Dunedin, New Zealand.

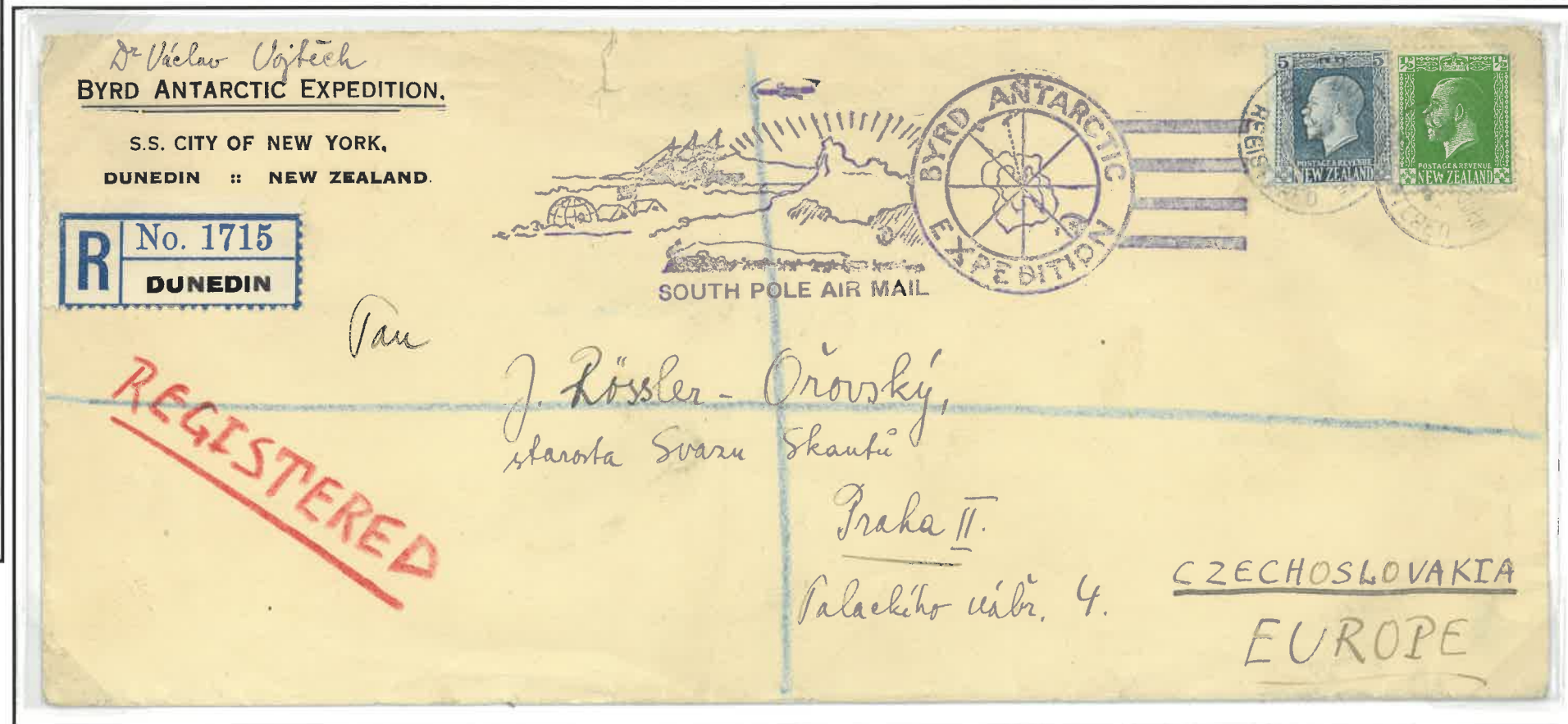


Byrd Antarctic Expedition Dogs at Mt. Cook, N.Z.
Mt. Cook Motor Coy. Series O2.

Registered large expedition cover sent by **Dr. Václav Vojtěch** to **Mr. J. Rössler Ořovský**, Mayor of the Scout Association in Prague. It was stamped on 18 November 1929 in Dunedin (Stamps used ½ + 5 NZ. pence) and was completed with another of the cachets from the First Byrd Antarctic Expedition (these were used on the mails that flew over the South Pole). The letter was written at the time of Dr. Vojtěch's second return from Antarctica, while still in New Zealand, before his next planned departure to Antarctica.



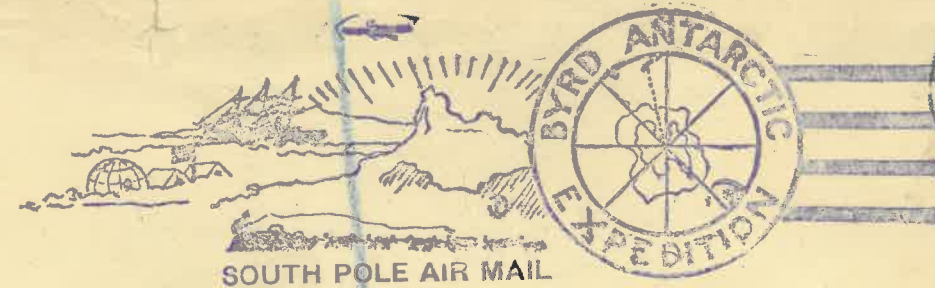
Cover sent by **Dr. Václav Vojtěch** to his father **František Vojtěch** in Skřivany, via the post office in Nový Bydžov, from the New Zealand Alps, where he learned to master dog sledding. The cover was stamped on 4 October 1928 in Hermitage, Mount Cook area (Stamps used 3x 1 NZ. pence). The cover was issued for the New Zealand Alps area of The Hermitage, Mount Cook, NZ.



Dr. Václav Vojtěch
BYRD ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION.

S.S. CITY OF NEW YORK,
DUNEDIN :: NEW ZEALAND.

R No. 1715
DUNEDIN



Pan

J. Rössler - Ořovský,
starosta Svazu Skautů

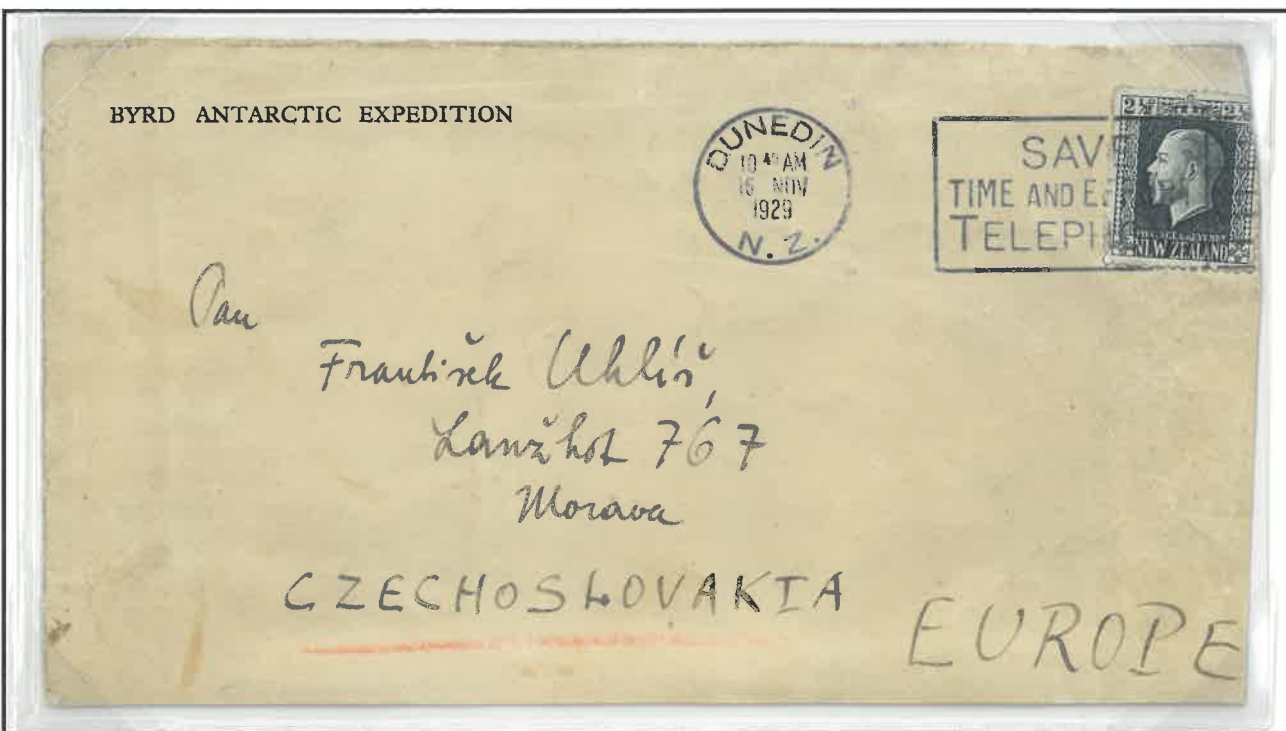
Praha II.

Palackého ulič. 4.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA
EUROPE

The first flight over the South Pole

While **Dr. Vojtěch** and his group were preparing to leave New Zealand for Antarctica, **R. E. Byrd** and his group took off from Little America on 28 November 1929 in a Ford 4 - AT Trimotor aircraft, named **FLOYD BENNETT**, for the historic first flight over the South Pole. **R. E. Byrd** as navigator, **Bernt Balchen** as chief pilot, **Harold June** as co-pilot and radio operator, and **Ashley McKinley** as flight photographer. Shortly after midnight on 29 November 1929, **FLOYD BENNETT** flew over the South Pole. They landed back at Little America Station on the morning of 29 November. The flight lasted 18 hours and 41 minutes.



Small expedition cover type I, sent by **Dr. Václav Vojtěch** to **Mr. František Uhlíř** in Lanžhot. The letter was stamped on 16 November 1929 in Dunedin, New Zealand. Used stamp 2½ NZ p. Written at the time of the return of part of the expedition from the Hermitage area and preparation for the next trip to Antarctica.

On the reverse of cover, in addition to Dr. Vojtěch's return address to New Zealand, is a special cachet of the First Byrd Antarctic Expedition with the name of the flagship **S.S. City of New York-Dunedin**.



Unused postcard of the second aircraft, a **Fairchild FC-2W2**, which Byrd used for research flights in Antarctica. It was named **Stars and Stripes**. Photographed at Little America Base in Antarctica. It is from the PE series of the Wharton catalog, from Byrd's first expedition.



Unused postcard of a penguin standing in Antarctica with the silhouette of the flagship **S.S. City of New York** in the Ice Barrier in the background, signed by **Dr. Václav Vojtěch**. Made in the Mráz studio, Staroměstské nám. 20, Prague I.



Unused postcard of a Ford 4-AT Trimotor aircraft named **FLOYD BENNETT** from Little America in Antarctica, signed by **Dr. Václav Vojtěch**. Made in Mráz studio, Staroměstské nám 20, Prague I.

Official small expedition cover type III. It was sent by the expedition doctor **F. D. Coman** and sent to the Maryland, USA, for **Dr. E. C. Lee**. Stamped on 19 February 1930 on board the **City of New York**, the first day of the expedition's departure from Antarctica back to the USA. US 2 C stamp used. **This cover is one of two hundred that flew over the South Pole** and bears one of the cachets of the First Byrd Antarctic Expedition entitled "South Pole Air Mail", which was part of the letters that flew over the South Pole and were specially stamped for the **NOV28'29** crossing along with the signatures of **R. E. Byrd** and **B. Balchen**.



Finally with dogs in Antarctica

On 18 February 1930, the *City of New York* broke through the ice into Bay of Whales. Here she was eagerly awaited by an expedition which, among other things, had already reached the South Pole by air. During the voyage, **Dr. Vojtěch** also worked as a helmsman. The embarkation of the team was carried out in a hurry. **Dr. Vojtěch** took advantage of a single day and made a trip to the Little America station with a dog sled he had trained himself. The *City of New York* then immediately sailed back from Antarctica.

Unused postcard with photograph of Antarctic station Little America by **Dr. Václav Vojtěch**. On the left the chimney, in the middle the roof and the exit from the building and on the right the radio tower. Below is the signature of **Dr. Václav Vojtěch**.



Letter sent by **Dr. Václav Vojtěch** to **Mr. Štěpán Floss** in Prague. The letter was written on official expedition radiogram message form on 18 February 1930 when **Dr. Vojtěch** visited the Antarctic base Little America. It was also the last day of the expedition's stay in Antarctica (left).

The personal size of expedition envelope, complete with the ship's name, was stamped on 17 April 1930 aboard the *City Of New York*. The envelope is stamped with "Konter" cachets (made by an expedition member). This cachet is with the name of the expedition and the dates when Byrd flew over both poles. (Receipt stamp, on the back - Prague 22.V.30).



Code	
Sent	Pink
Rec'd.	Yellow
Relayed	Blue
Intercepted	White

RADIOGRAM

BYRD ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

MSG Nr. _____ CK _____ Radio _____ Filed _____ M Date _____ 192 _____
Prefix Origin GMT GMT

TO: Little America, Antarctica 18. února 1930.

P. Štěpán Floss
 Praha II.
 Půlkopy 10.

Vážený Pane,

Srdcevný pozdrav z Malé Ameriky,

zimního ledová piktocionní expedice admirála Pryuda,
 dovoluje mi Vám zaslati s vácním uštkem štěstí
 československý učarstník expedice

Dr. Václav Vojtěch

FOLD HERE

Return to civilization

During the period between 20-28 February 1930, **Dr. Vojtěch** left the ship *City of New York* at 69°30'S. and 179°E and was boarding the whaling ship *Larsen*. He is accompanied by his favourite polar dog York from his sled dog team, whom he later took to his hometown Skřivany.

Unused postcard by **Dr. Václav Vojtěch** of Alaskan polar dogs, while relaxing during their journey to Little America station as part of the station's relocation from Antarctica. Signature of **Dr. Václav Vojtěch** on the left. Made in Mráz studio, Staroměstské nám 20, Prague I.



Letter sent by **Dr. Václav Vojtěch** to Mr. Josef Vrána. The letter was written on official expedition's radiogram form on 15 March 1930, when he was already sailing on the ship *Larsen* (left).

Official personal size expedition cover with the name of the ship, canceled 19 February 1930 on board *City Of New York* on the first day of the voyage from Antarctica. The letter is with one of the *City's* cachets of Byrd's First Antarctic Expedition. Arrival postmark Prague 29.4.1930.



Code	
Sent	Pink
Rec'd.	Yellow
Relayed	Blue
Intercepted . .	White

RADIOGRAM

BYRD ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

MSG Nr. _____ CK _____ Radio _____ Filed _____ M _____ Date _____ 192 _____
 Prefix _____ Origin _____ GMT _____ GMT _____

TO: *Mr. Josef Vrána*
Adresa: Little City of New York 15. března 1930.

P. Josef Vrána
Adresa: ředitelství pošt a tel.
Oddělení VII.
Pardubice.

Vážený pane tajemníku!

Děkuji Vám velmi vděčně za Vaš uctivý dopis
a blahé ústí novin z daleké vlast. Vlastopisní úkolika-
veditelská dalekou cestu z jihu na sever, domů.
Díky Vaší zánce, jsem trochu zanepraven zámlkou novin.
U mě je dost čam k čubě.

Rád v posledních chvílích ještě vyhovuji Vašemu přání
a zamlouvám oběs s expedicí vzhledem. Doufám, že
dojde. Bude to malá splátka na Vaš laskavost.
Díky za to do Hořic? Jsem blízko svého domova
a po návratu do vlasti si tam zajdu. Sblížím se tam
s Vaším milým přítelkem p. Bencem. Kdybyste tam také
mávil byl, měl bych tam své přátele, domů nezvámí,
avšak laskaví. Známe Hořice, nezvám tam však lidi.
Moji adresa do svého domova: Skřivany u Nového Bydruče.
Děkuji Vám ještě jednou za Vaši milou laskavost
a jsem s vřelou úctou Vaším oddaným
Dr. Václav Vojtěch

FOLD
HERE

Across the USA to the Czechoslovakia, and a tragic death

On the 24 April 1930, *Larsen* arrived in New York where the expedition mail was unloaded. In June 1930, the Byrd expedition successfully landed the flagship *City of New York* in New York. *Dr. Vojtěch* meets *R. E. Byrd* again and was honored with the *United States Congressional Gold Medal*. *Dr. Vojtěch* return to his native country is triumphant, for he returned as a successful polar explorer. The next years of his life were filled with lectures. He was busy with more work, this time an independent expedition to the North. Unfortunately, all his plans were brought to an end by his tragic death on the Elbe River in the spa town of *Sadská* on 6 August 1932.



The official personal size expedition cover, was stamped 2 June 1930 on board *City Of New York*, after the expedition returned to the USA. The cover is again stamped with one of the cachets of *City of NEW York*. It was sent to Mr. Emil Beneš in *Hořice*.

The official business size expedition cover, was postmarked on 3 May 1930 at the New York Central Post Office. The letter was sent to *Dr. Vojtěch* after the return of the expedition from Antarctica to the USA to the address where he was staying. Correct rate of postage 2c.



Printed matter-funeral card. (top right).

It was sent to *Dr. Ed. Kosinka* (attorney) in the town of *Královský Městec*.

Cancelled: Prague 25 dated 10.VIII.32 with a stamp of 20 hal. (the correct rate for printed matter).

The arrival stamp on the back - Prague 20.VI.30 with *Dr. Vojtěch's* address (scan part of the reverse side of the cover)



Scan of *Dr. Václav Vojtěch* funeral card.

