

90th Anniversary of the Police Force

On the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the State Police Force, an International Festival of Police Bands took place – the first event of this kind in the history of Poland’s Police Force. The event was held in Wrocław’s Market Square on 3 July. Besides the Polish police bands and choirs, the ensembles which participated in the Festival were the Central Band of the Border Guards from Nowy Sącz, and Police Bands from Germany, Slovakia, and Lithuania.

„Thus, the State Police Force was formed, first of all, of various Civil Guards of the former Congress Kingdom of Poland - created independently by the local population in the areas which the Russians had abandoned. With time, the guards were transformed into municipal militia units – the organisations which were more consolidated and flexible; however, unable to develop properly, mainly, due to the fact that the occupation authorities – both Austrian and German invaders hindered their activities; moreover, the militia formations acted independently, each of them in their own way, without the co-ordination of central authorities. Only after the expulsion of the invaders, was it possible to form as uniform as possible a corps named the Municipal Police. However, it was not uniform in its sense because of the fact that although all militia formations were transformed into Municipal or Communal Police and subordinated to central authorities, there were still a number of organisations acting more or less separately. This applies to the Folk Militia, the Military Police of the former Galicia, the National Military Police of the Former Prussian Partition Area, The Police of the Eastern Regions, the Police of the Central Lithuania and a number of police units in the towns of the Krakow, and Poznań Region, and in Pomerania, as well as the River Police and Railway Protection Service. That diversity was brought to an end with the implementation of the State Police Force Act on 24 July 1919. The act created the foundations of a uniform national security corps i.e. the State Police Force. From then on, the process of integration of various police organisations began, which was extended to the years 1919, 1920, and 1921.

”Na Posterunku” nr 46, 730(10) – ”On Guard Duty” – the Police Journal № 46,

With the establishing of the State Police Force, bands and choirs were also formed. According to the Police Journal ”Na Posterunku” (On Guard Duty) № 51, (11) 811, in the years 1927, the State Police Force had from 9 to 19 bands and from 2 to 7 choirs. (See the table below).

Years	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
Number of Bands	10	19	9	12	12	10	11
Number of Choirs	3	6	7	6	5	2	6

They participated in all major events of their units such as taking an oath of allegiance, parades, funerals, anniversaries, the Police Day celebrations, etc. In the daily detail of the Police High Commissioner (related to the Police Day), one can learn about the participation of the police bands in the morning service at the Post-Carmelite Church (at 55, Krakowskie Przedmieście) on 10 November 1937, and about the participation of the Police Bands – both marching and mounted – in the celebrations at the Tomb of an Unknown Soldier. In the afternoon parade of the marching detachments of the State Police and the company of Penitentiary Guards on Plac na Rozdrożu, the band which took part in the event was the Police Force Marching Band headed by the 2nd Mounted Squadron commanded by 2Lt Złakowski plus the Mounted Band. On the same day, in a radio broadcast, the Police High Commissioner delivered a speech. The children of fallen policemen sang, and the Central Police Band performed.

Today, there are three Police Bands in Poland acting in Warsaw (since 1968), in Wrocław (since 1974), and in Katowice (since 1973). Moreover, there are three choirs acting in Białystok (since 2003), Poznań (since 2003), and in Warsaw (since 2006).

This year, one-hundred-anniversary has been celebrated by the Police Corps of Lower Saxony. The Band of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Slovakia has been active since the year 1948; and, the beginnings of the Central Band of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania date back to the year 1935.

During the Festival all ensembles demonstrated their high artistic standards. The concert programmes, bands' drill, and the performance of nine compositions by the massed bands and choirs conducted by the directors of the bands taking part evoked admiration and recognition with the audience gathered on Wrocław's Market Square. The choirs gave additional performances at St. Elisabeth's, and St. Dorothy's Church where they received an exceptionally warm reception.

THE PROGRAMME OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLICE BANDS FESTIVAL IN WROCLAW

On the band stand (3:30 – 5:30 PM)

- The Police Band of the Silesian District from Katowice;
- The Band of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Slovakia;
- The Central Police Band from Warsaw;
- The Police Musical Corps of Lower Saxony.

At Market Square (5:30 – 7:30 PM)

- The Police Band of the Silesian District from Katowice;
- The Band of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Slovakia;
- The Central Police Band from Warsaw;
- Central Band of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania;
- Regional Police Command Band from Wrocław;
- The Central Band of the Border Guards from Nowy Sącz.

St. Elisabeth Church (6:30 – 7:30 PM) – The Choir of the Regional Police Command from Białystok;

St. Dorothy's Church (6:30 – 7:30 PM) – The Choir of the Metropolitan Police Command from Warsaw.

The concert performed by the massed bands and choirs: (7:30 -9:00 PM)

- "The Wrocław Bugle-Call" – conducted by C.W.O. Adam Witiw;
- S. Surzyński, arr. by K. Ołtarzewski, "Glory to the Polish Land" – conducted by Wioletta Miłkowska D. Univ., D.Mus.;
- W. Kilar, arr. by I. Stromski, the polonaise from the film "Pan Tadeusz" – conducted by Capt. Janusz Trzepizur;
- J. Steffaro, arr by J. De Meij, "March to Mars" – conducted by Col. Algirdas Radzevicius;
- Vangelis, arr. by S. Strączek, "Conquest of Paradise" – conducted by Maj. Stanisław Strączek D.Mus.;
- M. Wilson, "76 Trombones" – conducted by Col. Jan Nemček;
- A.Bürgel, "Tribute to the Tiger" – sung by Grzegorz Wilk, conducted by C.W.O. Adam Witiw;
- L. van Beethoven, arr. by M. Schneider, "European Anthem" – conducted by Thomas Boger.

All performances were announced by Lt. Col. Grzegorz Jach.

The International Police Bands Festival was concluded with the marching parade of all the bands taking part to the music of the famous "Warszawianka" (composed by K. Kurpiński and arranged by Z. Zakrzewski) conducted by C.W.O. Paweł Pastuch.

The Festival commenced the series of celebrations connected with this year's Police Day. On that day, before noon, a delegation laid a wreath at the commemorative tablet paying tribute to the policemen murdered at Twer. A wreath was also laid at the Monument of the Fallen Policemen on Osobowicki Cemetery. Later, in the Town Hall, a celebration was held during which a group of policemen was awarded with state and ministerial decorations. Another group were promoted to higher police ranks. Wrocław's market Square was the place where policemen demonstrated the technical equipment used in criminal investigation and road traffic control.

The recruitment centres of the Personnel Department of Municipal and Regional Police Command attracted the local population. It was possible to obtain information concerning the intake and service in the Police Force.

These important artistic and political events make us feel optimistic, and we hope that in the forthcoming years, we will have the following series of the Festival. May the performers, the organisers, and the sponsors not wait for the next Festival. Here, we would like to express our gratitude and congratulations to all performers for excellent concerts to and to the organisers of the event for their perfect arrangements.

On the Police Day (24 July this year), the ceremony of Changing of the Guards at the Tomb of an Unknown Soldier with the participation of police detachments took place. The ceremony was attended by the representatives of national authorities including Poland's Prime Minister Mr. Donald Tusk.

The present material – based on the National Archives deposits, the folders and the Website of the Festival, and the opinion survey of the audience - was elaborated by Lt. Col. Zbigniew Kuś.