

# Hungarian Stamps 2010

## THE HUNGARIAN BODY GUARD IS 250 YEARS OLD



Magyar Posta is releasing a special stamp to mark the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Hungarian Body Guard.

Based on a decision by Queen Maria Theresa of Hungary, a circular document calling for the formation of the Hungarian Body Guard was sent to the historic counties of Hungary on 1 March 1760. Young nobles from the counties were sent to Pozsony (today Bratislava, Slovakia), where the Hungarian Noble Body Guard was founded. The guards, who swore the oath of allegiance on 27 September, were presented to the queen in Vienna on 4 October. The first captain of the Guard between 1760 and 1762 was Count General Lipót Pálffy, who retained his superior rank as captain of

the Guard. 12 officers performed command duties at different levels, such as those of vice-captain, sergeant and vice-sergeant. The 120 guards were given the rank of sub-lieutenant or lieutenant. They served in 20 or 40 man units at the Viennese court, where they escorted the royal family's entourage as a guard of honour. They frequently performed ceremonial duties at the royal family's residence in Hungary, in the Buda Castle. When off duty, they practised military skills on foot or horseback. They studied languages, the classics and sciences, and learnt fencing and court dancing. After their period of service, ex-guardsmen could apply for posts in court and county offices as accomplished nobles familiar with court life. The main colours of their decorative uniforms embellished with Hungarian motifs were red, green and yellow. This was supplemented by a leopard skin with a silver buckle thrown over the shoulder.

Emperor Franz Joseph I abolished the Guard in 1849, but it was re-established for his coronation under the name of the Hungarian Royal Noble Body Guard. From 1904 the Hungarian Royal Infantry Guard served at the Buda Castle. The two bodies operated until 1918. After the election of Regent Miklós Horthy in 1920, the Hungarian Royal Body Guard was re-organised. This fostered the traditions of earlier guards, and performed the daily and ceremonial duties required in the period. Between 1946 and 1949 the Guard of the President of the Republic and the Parliamentary Guard operated. In 1958 the Ministry of the Interior's Government Guard was formed to protect party and state leaders as well as foreign delegations, to guard buildings of outstanding importance for the functioning of the state, and to perform ceremonial duties on state occasions and at other protocol events. Since 1990, with the odd minor change to its name, the Republican Guard Regiment has performed similar duties to its predecessor organisations. Since 1992, they have performed ceremonial duties in historical dress uniform. On 1 January 2000 they were entrusted with guarding the coronation insignia housed in the Dome Hall in the House of Parliament. (Source: László Fazakas on the Hungarian Body Guard)

On the left of the stamp design is the former uniform of the Hungarian Body Guard and on the right is today's uniform. The emblem of the Hungarian Body Guard is in the foreground of the stamp with part of the Royal Palace in the Buda Castle in the background. On the first day cover for the stamp there is a view of the Buda Castle and the emblem featuring on the stamp design is repeated. The commemorative postmark is a stylised drawing of the emblem.

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Order code:  
2010040010011 (stamp)  
2010040060012 (FDC)  
Date of issue: 1 March 2010

Perforated size: 40 x 30 mm, 50 stamps/sheet  
Number of copies: 350,000  
Printed by Állami Nyomda  
Designed by Ferenc Svindt

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