

# Latvia

**December 18, 1918**  
**First Issue Scott #1-2**

After centuries of Swedish, Polish-Lithuanian and Russian rule, a rule mainly executed by the Baltic German aristocracy, the Republic of Latvia was established on November 18, 1918 when it broke away and declared independence in the aftermath of World War I. The country's de facto independence was interrupted at the outset of World War II, beginning with Latvia's forcible incorporation into the Soviet Union, followed by the invasion and occupation by Nazi Germany in 1941, and the re-occupation by the Soviets in 1944 to form the Latvian SSR for the next 45 years.



Printed by A. Schnakenberg in Riga on the back of German military maps. These maps were the only good source of high quality paper in Latvia after World War I. There was such an abundance of these maps that they were even used to wrap fish. The sheets have 228 stamps in 12 rows of 19 stamps. This layout was optimized for the printing sheets, i.e. the maps. The shortage of paper necessitated such optimizations.

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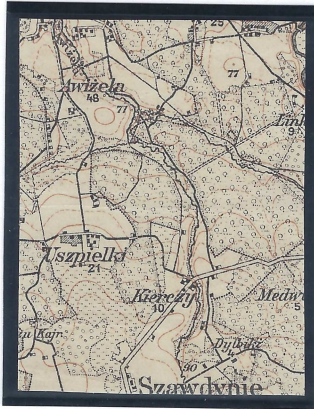
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The map designations refer to the column (letter - like H) and the row (number - like 17) in a large grid covering most of the occupied Baltic area.

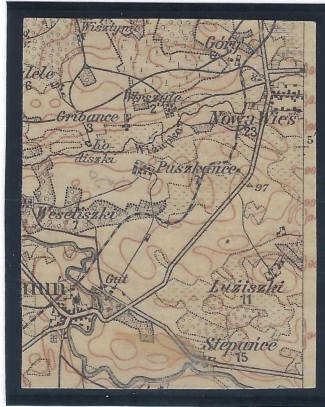
Contour lines: 1a (thin brown), 1b (thick brown), and II (black)

Language: Polish, Russian, Lettische (Latvian)

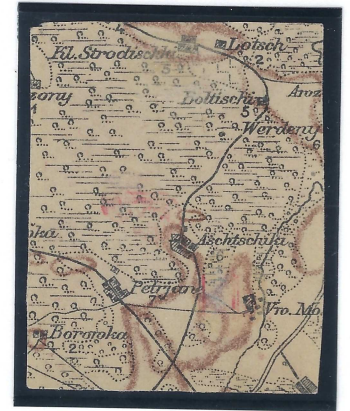
Positions: Printing upright or inverted in relation to map.



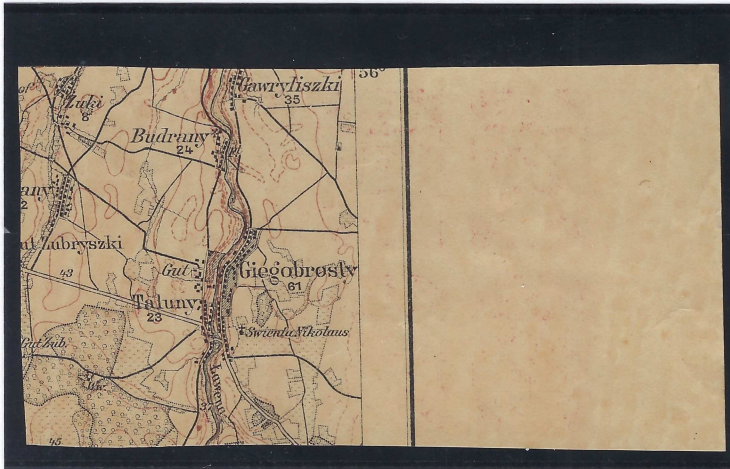
Map L-17, Type 1a  
Inverted  
Polish



Map Q-17, Type 1a  
Inverted  
Polish



Map T-17, Type 1b  
Upright  
Lettische



Map O-18, Type 1a  
Inverted  
Polish

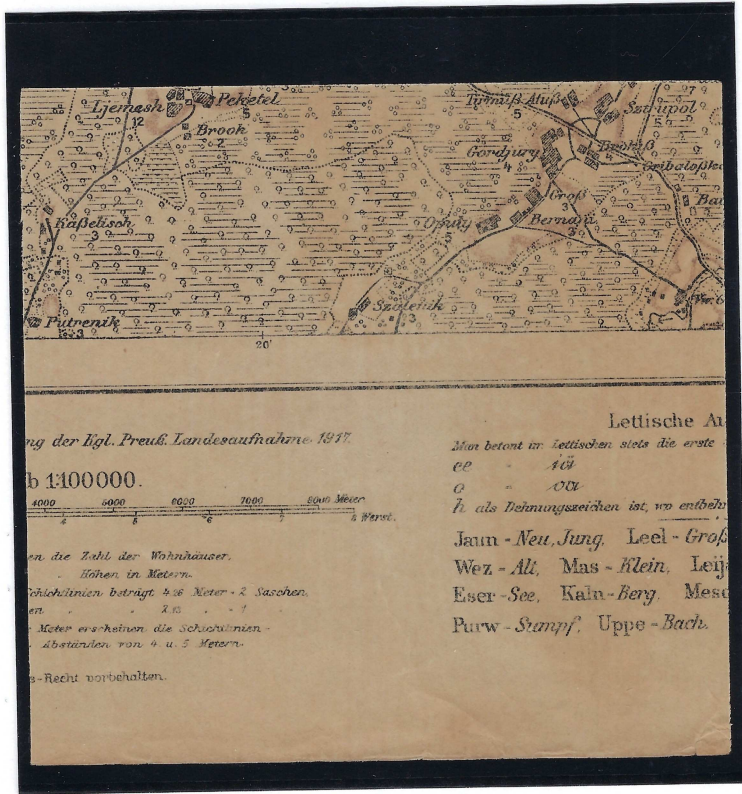
Map margins allow for individual stamps without a section of map on the reverse.



Map Q-18, Type II  
Inverted  
Polish

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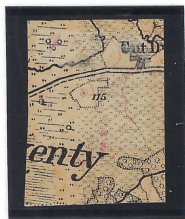
Map T-15, Type 1b  
Upright  
Lettische



Map N-17, Type 1a  
Upright  
Polish



Map R-18, Type II  
Inverted  
Lettische



Map L-18, Type 1a/II  
Upright  
Polish



Map L-18, Type 1a/II  
Upright  
Polish

Sections of maps were often updated to give troops current information, particularly regarding railroad construction. This resulted in combinations of map types within the same map.

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Scott #1 and 21 on partial cover from Zehsis, Latvia (Cēsis).

The Battle of Cēsis in June 1919, when Estonian and Latvian forces defeated the Germans, was one of the decisive battles in the Latvian War of Independence.