

Collector's Tour of the Eastern Block

by Cst. R. Morrow, Sylvan Lake, Alberta

Editor's Note: Cst. Morrow who is a member of the International Police Association (IPA), has been collecting badges from the Force, other Canadian police forces, and IPA colleagues around the world for eight years. In July and August, 1988, Morrow toured Scandinavia, residing in IPA accommodations in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark. He then travelled to Soviet Russia, Poland and East Germany. This is an account of his memorable trip and attempts to add to his collection of police memorabilia.

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Several months before leaving, I contacted fellow European collectors seeking advice on trading badges with their neighbours in the Eastern Block countries. All strongly suggested that I not bring up the subject, and gave me stern warnings against it. But being a stubborn person, nothing was going to deter me.

In Scandinavia, I received warm receptions in Copenhagen, Oslo, Stockholm and Helsinki, toured many police offices and received many new items for my collection. I can't say enough about the Scandinavian people's warmth and friendly manner, and about the open door treatment that they gave me.

Before entering the Eastern Block countries, I had given a great deal of thought as to the best approach in trading badges. I concluded my best bet would be to have our Russian guide draft a short note that I could present to police officers

with whom I wished to trade. Translated, it came out something like this, "He is a policeman from Canada. He would like to get a hat and things characteristic of us. He is friendly and means no harm." Having been warned about our activities in the Soviet Union, and unsure of their laws and customs, I debated for two days before finally deciding to approach, note in hand, a traffic cop near our hotel in Moscow.

Introducing myself and upon getting a grin, I nervously produced my note and watched him read it. I then pointed to his hat, and with a couple of hand signals tried to explain that I had some items to trade for it — a simple exchange.



Here's a highway patrol officer's dream! Show this to your Division Traffic Officer. At \$100,000 (cost in Holland), there may be some hesitation. The Dutch police have 25 of these little beauties in their inventories. The top end speed is 265 km/h, but if a Porsche isn't your style, you could always try one of their other cars (second best...), a Mercedes.