

On 14 March 1919 he returned to the Paris Peace Conference intent on securing the earliest possible repatriation of the Czechoslovak Legion from Russia. Štefánik died on 4 May 1919 when the Caproni Ca.33 biplane in which he was flying back to his liberated homeland crashed near Ivanka pri Dunaji, close to Bratislava. He was buried on Bradlo Hill, where a memorial designed by Dušan Samuel Jurkovič was later built and became a symbol of the desire and struggle for freedom.



▲ Štefánik's tomb, Bradlo.

The wreckage of the Caproni Ca.33 biplane in which Štefánik was killed.



Coin details

Denomination: €10

Composition: 900 silver / 100 copper

Weight: 18 g

Diameter: 34 mm

Edge lettering: VÝZNAMNÁ OSOBNOSŤ SLOVENSKEHO
NÁRODA (Major Slovak national figure)

Issuing volume: limited to a maximum of 15,000 coins
in either brilliant uncirculated or proof quality

Designers: Mária Poldaufová (obverse)

Ivan Řehák (reverse)

Engraver: Dalibor Schmidt

Producer: Kremnica Mint (Slovakia)

The coin's obverse design pays tribute to Milan Rastislav Štefánik's state-building activities by depicting the image shown on the lesser coat of arms of the Czechoslovak Republic – a Czech crowned lion with the Slovak coat of arms imposed on its chest – along with a silhouette map of the Czechoslovak Republic overlying its lower part. To the right is the coat of arms of the Slovak Republic, above which are the denomination '10' and the name of the currency 'EURO', one above the other. Below the top edge, in semicircle, is the name of the issuing country 'SLOVENSKO', and below that is year of issuance '2019'. In the lower part of the design are the words of Štefánik's personal motto: 'VERIŤ • MILOVAŤ • PRACOVAŤ' (To Believe, To Love, To Work). Below the main image are the mint mark of the Kremnica Mint (Mincovňa Kremnica), consisting of the letters 'MK' placed between two dies, and the stylised letters 'MP' referring to the obverse designer, Mária Poldaufová.

The reverse depicts a portrait of Štefánik and, to the right, the Caproni Ca.33 biplane in which he was flying when he died in 1919. Below the top edge are the years of Štefánik's birth '1880' and death '1919' separated by a dot. The first names 'MILAN RASTISLAV' appear in semicircle next to the left edge, while the surname 'ŠTEFÁNIK' is inscribed below the portrait. Next to the right edge are the stylised letters 'IŘ' referring to the reverse designer, Ivan Řehák.



100th anniversary of the death of Milan Rastislav Štefánik

Silver collector coin

Published by Národná banka Slovenska, April 2019

© Copyright 2019, Národná banka Slovenska

Photographs: The NBS Archives, Mincovňa Kremnica, š. p.

Wikimedia, Progress Promotion

<http://www.nbs.sk/en/banknotes-and-coins/euro-coins/collector-coins>



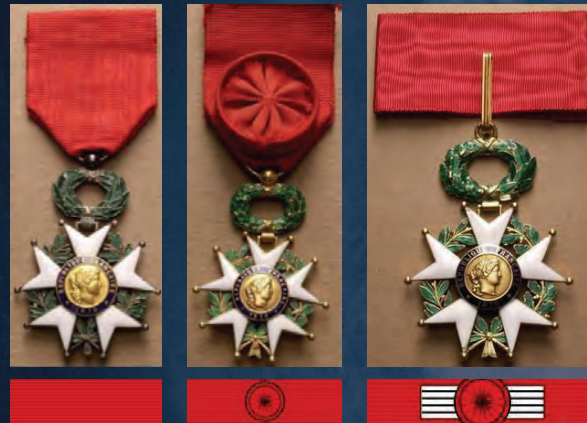
As a scientist, military pilot, diplomat and Minister of War in the First Czechoslovak Republic, Milan Rastislav Štefánik is one of the most important figures in Slovak and Czech history. His stellar career, life, and tragic death put him in the company of Slovak greats. With the help of his efforts, Slovaks emerged from their second-class status within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where, particularly from 1867, the Hungarian ruling elites had been putting them under strong pressure to assimilate with Hungarians. Together with Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Beneš, he led the Czechoslovak resistance abroad during the First World War and was instrumental in the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918.

Milan Rastislav Štefánik was born on 21 July 1880 in the village of Košariská, then part of the Kingdom of Hungary and now in Slovakia. After attending a number of schools, he completed his secondary education at the town of Szarvas in Hungary. He studied astronomy at Charles University in Prague, where in 1904 he graduated with a doctorate. In that same year he started work in France as an astronomer at the Paris-Meudon Observatory. In order to observe such phenomena as the solar eclipse, solar corona, Halley's Comet and planetary nebulae, he participated in research expeditions that took him to places all over the world, including Mont Blanc, Samarkand, Spain, Brazil, Ecuador, Morocco, and Tahiti.

The house in Košariská where Štefánik was born and which is now a museum to his memory.



In 1912 he received French citizenship, which made it easier for him to obtain funding for research projects. Before the war, he completed a diplomatic mission in Ecuador and secured for France a concession to build meteorological stations and wireless telegraphy stations, which on the eve of the First World War were strategically significant. At the proposal of the Navy Ministry, the French Government made Štefánik a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour. It was the first of many awards that he received during the war years.



Štefánik's decorations:

Knight of the Legion of Honour (1914), Officer of the Legion of Honour (1917), Commander of the Legion of Honour (1919).

As a naturalised Frenchman, Štefánik was conscripted when war broke out. In August 1914 he joined the 102nd Infantry Regiment at Chartres, and in early 1915 he transferred to flight school at his own request. At the end of his training he held the rank of pilot officer. On the Western Front he flew both surveillance and combat missions, and also did pioneering work in military meteorology. In September 1915 he was transferred to the Serbian Front, where he flew with MFS 99 Squadron until the surrender of the Serbian Army later that year. Štefánik played a significant role in building up the Czechoslovak Legion, which fought with the Entente powers against Austro-Hungary and Germany and thus supported the liberation of the Slovak and Czech peoples. In June 1918 he was promoted to the rank of brigadier general.

Štefánik's direct involvement with the Czechoslovak national movement began in December 1915. After undergoing a stomach operation in January 1916, he was appointed to a post at the French Foreign Ministry. He promoted the idea of breaking up the Habsburg Empire and establishing an independent Czechoslovak state to journalists, politicians, and diplomats in France (throughout the war years), Italy (1916), Russia (1916–7), Romania (1916), the United States (1917), in Italy again (1918), and finally in Siberia (1918–9). When Czechoslovakia was established in 1918, he served as its first Minister of War. His last diplomatic activity took place in March and April 1919, when he worked on solving conflicts of jurisdiction between the French and Italian military missions in Czechoslovakia. Štefánik undertook his most difficult mission in 1918, when he visited the Czechoslovak Legion in Siberia (around 60,000 men), which after seeking transportation back to France had taken control of the Trans-Siberian Railway and become involved in the Russian civil war. Štefánik's task was to rally the demoralised troops, organise them into a regular force, and decide on their further activities.



Štefánik as a pilot being decorated with the French War Cross.