

# Collector Coins



face value	<b>10 zł</b>
metal	<b>925/1000 Ag</b>
finish	<b>proof</b>
diameter	<b>32.00 mm</b>
weight	<b>14.14 g</b>
mintage	<b>92,000 pcs</b>

**Obverse:** An image of the anchor as the emblem of Polska Walcząca (Fighting Poland) on a brick wall. On its background, top right, the image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland. On the left, circumscribed, the inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA (People's Republic), on the right, POLSKA (Poland) and the notation of the year of issue, 2004. Down left, superimposed on the arm of the anchor, the inscription, 10 Zł. The Mint's mark,  $\frac{m}{w}$ , under the Eagle's left leg.

**Reverse:** The image of an Uprising fighter against a brick wall. On the rim, an inscription, 60. ROCZNICA POWSTANIA WARSZAWSKIEGO (60th Anniversary of Warsaw Uprising); down, incumscription, 1944-2004, starting and ending with a square.



face value	<b>2 zł</b>
metal	<b>CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy</b>
finish	<b>standard</b>
diameter	<b>27.00 mm</b>
weight	<b>8.15 g</b>
mintage	<b>900,000 pcs</b>

**Obverse:** An image of the Eagle as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland. On both sides of the Eagle, the year of issue, 20-04. Below the Eagle, an inscription, Zł 2 Zł. On the rim, an inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA (Republic of Poland), preceded and followed by six pearls. The Mint's mark,  $\frac{m}{w}$ , under the Eagle's left leg.

**Reverse:** An image of the anchor as the emblem of Polska Walcząca (Fighting Poland) on a brick wall. On the rim, an inscription, 60. ROCZNICA POWSTANIA WARSZAWSKIEGO (60th Anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising); down, the circumscription, 1944-2004, starting and ending with a pearl.

**On the edge an inscription, NBP, repeated eight times, every second one inverted by 180°, separated by stars.**

*Coin designer Ewa Tyc-Karpińska*



On July 28, 2004, the National Bank of Poland is putting into circulation collector coins that commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, of the following face values:

- 10 zł – struck in silver, in proof finish,
- 2 zł – struck in standard finish, in CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy, i.e. Nordic Gold.

The Warsaw Uprising was one of the greatest battles of the World War II. The solitary, two-month long fight of the capital city with the military power of the Third Reich, juxtaposed against the indifference of the Red Army standing at

the city gates and the sparse assistance from Western allies, became a phenomenon without historic precedent not only in Poland, but also in Europe.

Initially Warsaw was to be excluded from the "Burza" ('Storm') action, which involved intensified sabotage activity at the rear of the German army on the eve of Red Army's invasion into Poland, but the decision was changed after the Home Army's (AK's) disastrous experience in its relationships with the Russians in the eastern areas of Poland. For the Home Army to liberate the

*Coins struck by the State Mint in Warsaw.*

*Printed by NBP Printing Office*

Design: DECORUM

– 60th Anniversary of Warsaw Uprising –

capital city of Poland and act as a host to the Red Army seemed as the last chance to make the world take notice of the Polish people's commitment to achieving full independence.

On July 31, 1944, the chief commander of the Home Army, general Tadeusz "Bór" Komorowski, and the commander of the Home Army's Warsaw District, colonel Antoni Chruściel "Monter", with the support of the Government Delegate for Poland, Stanisław Jankowski, set the date of the Uprising.

At 5 p.m. on August 1, the poorly armed troops of the Home Army of about 25,000 soldiers challenged the German garrison in Warsaw of nearly 20,000.

A spectacular success of the "W" hour was the capture of Warsaw's highest building – the Prudential. The white and red flag waved at the roof of the building. Unfortunately, the majority of attacks of August 1 failed. The failed attempt to capture the police district at Aleja Szuca and the Okęcie airport ended in numerous casualties. The rebels did not manage to take over bridges, and the uprising quickly collapsed in the Praga district.

Nonetheless, the Home Army succeeded in numerous attacks in the next few days. They captured the Main Post Office at Napoleon square (now pl. Powstańców Warszawy – Warsaw Insurgents Square), the Post Office Station at Aleje Jerozolimskie, controlled the entire area of the Powiśle Power Plant, and seized the building of the State Security Printing Works in the Old Town. The concentrated Kedyw (Kierownictwo Dywersji – the chief staff governing sabotage activities) troops led by Lieutenant Colonel Jan Mazurkiewicz "Radosław" did their best. On August 5, the "Zośka" battalion captured the concentration camp at "Gęsiówka" and freed 350 Jews. The Germans quickly mustered additional forces to quell the Uprising. They created a special corps led by SS General Erich von dem Bach. The brigade of criminals under the command of Oskar Dirlwanger was sent to pacify the city and slaughter civilians of the Wola district. Around 40,000 people were executed in this district. RONA (Russkaja Oswoboditielnaja Narodnaja Armia – Russian National Liberation Army) troops under the command of SS General Kamiński bestially murdered people of the Ochota district, acting on Adolf Hitler's and chief commander's of the SS and the Police, Heinrich Himmler's order that every resident of the area was to be killed.

At the same time, in the liberated districts free Poland structures emerged despite severe conditions. On August 2, the first edition of the "Information Bulletin" during the rebellion was issued by the Home Army. It may be difficult to believe that there were more than 150 newspaper titles printed during the Uprising, including two children's magazines that were printed in the Żoliborz district.

The underground civil authorities came out of hiding, and issued orders on improvised burials, securing property left behind by the Germans, and forbidding any lynching. Special courts and security service authorities began official operation. As in September 1939, representatives of the OPL (Obrona Przeciwlotnicza – anti-aircraft defense service) and the Security Guard remained on duty at individual tenement houses. There was amazing enthusiasm. The population of Warsaw started to build barricades and cellar passages to neighbouring tenement houses. People shared their supplies fairly, and organised care for children, refugees from other districts still occupied by the Germans, and victims of fires.

From the first days of August, the Harcerska Poczta Polowa (Scouts' Field Postal Service) was operating. Letters were carried by the "zawiszacy" (the youngest scouts) – boys of around 12-15. They

reached not only civilians, but also the front troops, even at the farthest outposts. Despite the extreme conditions, the Postal Service adhered to the rule that a letter sent in the Śródmieście district was to be delivered on the same day. On September 2, first rebellion stamps appeared on letters.

The underground radio station "Błyskawica" (Lightning) and Polish Radio broadcast their programmes. Teams of filmmakers and photojournalists, who had been trained by the underground, began their work as well, including the famous sportsman and Olympic Games champion Eugeniusz Lokajski, who died on September 25, 1944.

Events and concerts featuring famous Warsaw actors were organised throughout the city. Songs performed by Mieczysław Fogg and Mira Zimińska were very popular. A puppet theatre was open in the Powiśle district.

The enthusiasm spurred many to volunteer for the struggle. The numbers of underground fighters grew, but unfortunately many of them lacked weapons. Allied airplane drops were not enough, despite the commitment of Polish, British and South African airmen.

The partisans from the Kampinos Forest provided their support to the Żoliborz district. Partisans from Chojnowskie Forests managed to reach the Mokotów district. In the second half of August, after effective actions, the situation in Śródmieście improved. On August 20, the PASTA building at Zielna street was captured. Three days later, the partisans captured the Church of the Holy Cross, and the Police Station at Krakowskie Przedmieście street, seizing a lot of weapons and ammunition.

The heroic fight of Starówka (Old Town) which had become cut-off became legendary. The ferocious battles for every building and every storey resulted in numerous casualties on both sides. Old Town houses were destroyed by bombs and missiles. No building was left standing. The defenders of the Old Town did not surrender. On September 2 they withdrew through sewers to Śródmieście. The fate of wounded fighters left in Old Town hospitals proved tragic. Many of them were murdered and burned by the Germans. Civilians, crowding in cellars, went through hell as well. Those lucky enough to survive bombings, fell victim to robbery and rape.

After the fall of the Old Town, the Germans attacked Powiśle, capturing it on September 6. The situation became critical. Only with difficulty could the fighters stop the enemy attacks at Northern Śródmieście from Nowy Świat street.

Meanwhile, the front moved forward on the other side of the Wisła (Vistula) river. On September 14 the Soviet army with the support from the 1st Polish Army captured the Praga district. The inhabitants of Warsaw believed that the help they had been waiting so long for was coming at last. Two days later, under orders from Marshal Rokossowski, the first soldiers of General Berling crossed the Wisła river and reached the Czerniaków district, which was fighting fiercely and which had been separated from Śródmieście. Further crossings under fire from German artillery and machine guns resulted in defeat, as did the attempt to capture a foothold in Żoliborz. For Stalin, the action was purely a propagandistic display, designed to demonstrate good will at a time when the fate of the Uprising was already decided.

On September 18, when American airplanes appeared over Warsaw, its inhabitants were filled with hope once again. The containers suspended from parachutes were initially thought to be landing troops. Unfortunately, the majority of the weapons dropped landed in

the areas taken over by the Germans. The help had arrived too late. On September 23 the final fights in the Czerniaków district died out. Mokotów surrendered on September 27. The evacuation to Śródmieście by sewers had disastrous effects and cost many lives. The Germans threw grenades and calcium carbide into the sewers. Its fumes caused nervous shock and hallucinations. Many people drowned of exhaustion.

Żoliborz fought until September 30. Śródmieście, isolated, decided to surrender.

On October 2, after several days of negotiations, the general headquarters of the Home Army signed the act of surrender. Around 18,000 fighters had died in the struggle, and at least 150,000 civilians were killed. Around 17,000 Germans were killed or missing.

According to the terms of the surrender agreement, the surviving fighters were sent to prison war camps. Civilians were driven out of the city and forced into destitution.

The Warsaw Uprising was undoubtedly the most important event in the capital city's history. Because of the international situation, Poles were forsaken in this uneven fight. By stalling the Red Army's offensive, Stalin allowed the Germans to pacify the city. The passive attitude of the Western allies, who had accepted without question the division into spheres of influence at the Teheran conference in late 1943, resulted in the destruction of the capital city of Poland.

*Stanisław Maliszewski  
Warsaw Uprising Museum*