


Coins

– 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR –




face value	200 zł
metal	900/1000Au
finish	proof
diameter	27.00 mm
weight	15.50 g
mintage	4,400 pcs

Obverse: On the right-hand side, an image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland, below: a notation of the year of issue, 2005 and an inscription, 200 ZŁ. On the left-hand side, a semicircular inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA. At the bottom, on the left-hand side, stylized: the pigeon with the olive branch in its beak and the map graticule. The Mint's mark, , under the Eagle's left leg.

Reverse: A circumscription, 60. ROCZNICA ZAKOŃCZENIA II WOJNY ŚWIATOWEJ. In the centre, stylized: the globe and the silhouettes of aircrafts used in World War II, in the middle an inscription, 1945. Below, the stylized map of Poland.




face value	10 zł
metal	925/1000 Ag and green paint
finish	proof
diameter	32.00 mm
weight	14.14 g
mintage	70,000 pcs

Obverse: At the top, a semicircular inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA, below, an image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland. Below, stylised figures of soldiers of different military formations. At the bottom, a notation of the year of issue, 2005, and below, an inscription, 20 ZŁ. The Mint's mark, , under the Eagle's left leg.

Reverse: At the top, a semicircular inscription, 60. ROCZNICA ZAKOŃCZENIA, below, II WOJNY / ŚWIATOWEJ. Below, stylized: the ruins and the pigeon with the olive branch in its beak. On the left-hand side, an inscription, 1945.



face value	2 zł
metal	CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy
finish	standard
diameter	27.00 mm
weight	8.15 g
mintage	1,000,000 pcs

Obverse: An image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland, on both sides of the Eagle a notation of the year of issue, 20-05, below the Eagle an inscription, ZŁ 2 ZŁ, in the rim a circular inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA, preceded and followed by six pearls. The Mint's mark, , under the Eagle's left leg.

Reverse: Stylized: the combat helmet of WZ 40 type placed on the automatic rifle SWT-40, below, the English helmet of Mk II type placed on the machine pistol STEN, with the stylized image of the Cross of the Valorous in the background. The pigeon with the olive branch in its beak on the barrel of the pistol. At the top: the stylized map graticule, below: a semicircular inscription, 60. ROCZNICA ZAKOŃCZENIA / II, below, WOJNY / ŚWIATOWEJ.

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

Designer of the coins: Ewa Tyc-Karpińska

Coins struck by the State Mint in Warsaw.

Printed by NBP Printing Office

Design: DECORUM



On 6 May 2005, the National Bank of Poland issued coins marking the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The coins have had the following face value:

- 200 zł – struck in proof finish in gold,
- 10 zł – struck in proof finish in silver,
- 2 zł – struck in standard finish, in Nordic Gold.

The Second World War, which broke out on 1 September 1939 with the

German invasion of Poland, was the greatest and bloodiest cataclysm in the history of civilised nations. It was a global conflict which – in addition to covering the territory of Europe – extended to Africa, Asia, Australia, the South Sea Islands, and to nearly all seas and oceans. Of the 67 states then in existence, 61 were engaged in war operations in the years 1939-1945. About 1.7 billion people, or almost 80% of the world's inhabitants, were directly or indirectly involved in the war. War operations were conducted on the

territory of 40 states and it is estimated that 100-110 million men and women were mobilised during the conflict.

The responsibility for the outbreak of the war and for its escalation lies primarily with Nazi Germany and its allies, fascist Italy and militaristic Japan, who together strove for world domination. Using all available means to achieve this aim, these countries' governments did not hesitate to force their will on their neighbours through armed aggression and genocide. The war brought to many countries not only the loss of independent existence but also the threat of biological extinction.

In its defence of the highest principles of liberty and human dignity, Poland was joined by a wide coalition of democracies, led at first by France and Great Britain, then, from December 1941, by the United States. Starting in June 1941, the democracies were also supported by the Soviet Union being attacked by Germany. However, it should be remembered that the Soviet Union acted in close cooperation with the Third Reich right up to the moment of the German invasion.

In the first years of the Second World War, German armies won repeated military victories. It was only in the summer of 1943 that there was a clear breakthrough in the struggle in Europe and that the Wehrmacht was forced to adopt a defensive stance. From that time on, the strategic initiative lay with the Allies. Although Italy capitulated in September 1943, war operations in the European theatre were to last until May 1945, when the resistance of the Third Reich's armed forces was broken at last.

On 7 May 1945, in Reims, at the headquarters of General Dwight Eisenhower, representatives of the German armed forces, General Alfred Jodl and Admiral Hans von Friedeburg, signed the act of Germany's unconditional surrender. War operations were to end on 8 May at 11:01 PM Central European Time. Representatives of Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union were present during the signing. However, at the express request of Joseph Stalin, the capitulation ceremony was repeated before Soviet Marshal Georgi Zukov in Karlhorst, a Berlin suburb, during the night of May 8 to 9. Germany was represented by Marshal Wilhelm Keitel. At the moment of signing, it was almost 2:00 AM in Moscow on 9 May 1945. For this reason, in the Soviet Union and in the people's democracies subordinated to it, VE Day was celebrated on the 9th and not the 8th of May.

It should be noted, however, that although the war in Europe came to an end on 8 May 1945, it raged on in Asia. The Japanese imperial army resisted ferociously for several more months. It is only with Japan's capitulation on 2 September 1945 that the Second World War truly ended.

The tally of losses incurred during the Second World War is horrifying to this day. War operations were accompanied by mass terror, massacres, and deportations of entire populations. Given the unprecedented number of victims, an estimate of the number of human beings who perished during the war can only be approximate. It is estimated that over 50 million people, including 20 million soldiers, were killed in action or murdered, and 35 million others were wounded or permanently maimed. The estimated casualties of the Allies, excluding Poland, are as follows:

Soviet Union:	20 million (11.7% of the population)
China:	2.2 million (this figure includes only soldiers)
Yugoslavia:	1.7 million (11.03% of the population)
Great Britain:	0.6 million (1.27% of the population)
France:	0.5 million (1.19% of the population)
United States:	0.3 million (0.23% of the population)

The estimated casualties of the Axis Powers are as follows:

Germany:	9.7 million (12.31% of the population)
Japan:	1.5 million (this figure includes only soldiers)
Italy:	0.9 million (2.06% of the population)

The war also brought immense material losses. In Europe alone, material losses are estimated to have been 260 to 300 billion USD, at then values. Countries engaged in the global conflict had to earmark about 70% of their national incomes to enlarge and maintain enormous armed forces. Direct expenditures on war operations are estimated to have been the then astronomical sum of 1.2 trillion USD.

Of all the countries that participated in the war Poland's losses were particularly heavy. In 1938 our country had 34.8 million inhabitants and occupied an area of 388,566 km². In 1945, Poland's population had fallen to 24 million, and its area had been reduced to 312,677 km² in consequence both of war operations and of territorial changes forced upon our country. According to estimates announced in 1947 by the War Reparations Office of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, over 6 million Polish citizens perished during the war. The significance of such figures is shocking, as it meant that 20% of Poland's pre-war inhabitants were dead.

Poland was the first victim of armed aggression in the Second World War. On 1 September 1939, our country was invaded by the armed forces of the Third Reich, followed on 17 September 1939 by those of the Soviet Union. Thanks to the immense military superiority of these countries, they succeeded in breaking the resistance of the Polish armies and occupied the country. According to estimates, over 5 million Polish citizens fell victim to German policies of mass terror and extermination. Repressions conducted by the Soviet authorities led to the death of at least 500,000 more Polish citizens during deportations, in prisons and concentration camps, and in mass executions. In addition, direct war operations led to the death of about 600,000 people. The war and the occupation led to the permanent disability of up to 800,000 people.

Material losses were less painful in human terms, but affected the daily existence of millions of survivors nonetheless. As a direct result of war operations and in consequence of the occupiers' deliberate policies, 39% of Poland's national assets were destroyed.

Poland played an important political and military role during the Second World War. Our country's struggle in defence of its independence in September 1939 initiated the formation of a wide anti-fascist coalition. Poland remained an active member of this coalition during the entire course of the war in Europe. Poland's armed effort, which began as a defensive war in 1939,

included the underground resistance of the occupied country and the activities of regular units of the Polish Armed Forces in the West and of the Polish Army on the Eastern Front.

In September 1939, 950,000 Polish soldiers were mobilised to defend the country. The occupation of Poland by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union did not lead the Polish nation to give up arms. The country immediately set out to rebuild its armed forces in the form of an underground resistance movement and in the regular Polish Armed Forces abroad, which were reconstituted on the basis of agreements with France and Great Britain and which were posted in those countries and in the Near East. The German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 made it possible to form Polish army units in the latter country as well. Under the command of General Władysław Anders, this 100,000 strong Polish Army in the USSR was evacuated to the Near East in consequence of the unfriendly attitude and actions of the Soviet authorities. Following the Germans' discovery at Katyn of mass graves of slain Polish officers, the USSR broke off diplomatic relations with the Polish government and began forming Polish army units under Soviet command. These units' first commanding officer was Colonel Zygmunt Berling. The strength of regular Polish Army units engaged alongside the other Allies rose progressively during the war until, by the end of the conflict, close to 600,000 Poles were fighting on both the Western and Eastern fronts.

It is worth emphasising that Poland was the only occupied country in Europe where an underground state was formed with fully fledged structures: It had its own leadership, administration, judiciary, secret education system, and even its own armed forces in the form of the underground Home Army which, at its greatest strength in 1944, had 380,000 men under arms!

It would be impossible to enumerate all the battles in which Polish soldiers fought. Let us only mention a few as examples: Westerplatte, the Battle of the Bzura, Narvik, Tobruk, Monte Cassino, Falaise, Arnhem, the Burza (Storm) Campaign, the Warsaw Uprising, Lenino, Studzianki, Wał Pomorski, Kołobrzeg, Budziszyn, and the conquest of Berlin. It should be remembered that in the years 1939-1945 over 120,000 Polish soldiers fell in battle. The wartime effort of Polish society was such that Poland's contribution to the final victory in the Second World War was greatest after that of the Big Four: the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France.

*Witold Głębowski
Polish Army Museum in Warsaw*