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The Stamps of the Generalgouvernement

Historic review

The Generalgouvernement was created on 26 October 1939 after the end of the Polish Campaign. The government siege, originally located in Lodz, was transferred to Krakau after Lodz had been integrated to the Reich Territory. For the German Reich it was considered as being abroad and was as such submitted to customs and currency control. Administrative regulations were similar to those in the reich, but not identical.

The stamps of the General Government were legal tender only in the districts of Krakau, Lublin, Radom and Warsaw and from 1 August 1941 on, also in Galicia, but not in the areas of Polish Upper Silesia, Warthegau (Posen and Lodz), the Olsa Area (Austrian Silesia), the Danzig corridor, Zichenau County, Suwalki County (Sudauen) and District Soldau, due to the fact that all these areas had been incorporated into the German Reich and thus used only German stamps.

At first, German stamps without overprinting could be used in the General Government at a rate of one Reichspfennig = 2 Groschen (officially Valid untill 15.12.1939, but tolerated till spring 1940), mixed franking were also possible, from 1 December 1939 onwards. The Poles had to pay the Reich foreign rates for postal service inland and abroad, and for local postal service, the Reich long distance rates, this till 31.03.1940.

All stamps from the years 1939 and 1940 valid in the Reich, could be used in the Generalgouvernement.

German Reich stamps valid during the „forerunner phase“

Mi # 467–473, 482–495, 512–539, 660/661, 664–674, 684–78

German Reich Stamps still tolerated afterwards

15.12 till 31.12.1939

Mi # 467–473, 482–495, 512–539, 660/661, 664–674, 684–78

01.01.1940 till 30.06.1940

Mi # 467–473, 482–495, 512–528, 686–738

01.07.1940 till 30.09.1940

Mi # 467–473, 482–496, 512–528, 686–689, 700–738

To date, not all the stamps listed have been documented.

1 The provisional Stamps Issues

The Stamps Issue Mi # 1-13 proves that the Polish Campaign and the rapid occupation came as a surprise to the German Reich Post. The Deutsche Post Osten had only been implemented in few central places of the Generalgouvernement, and with few security personal, in order to support the deficient Field Post system.

Here after the Deutsche Post Osten ensured the postal service for German Officials and their families. From this moment on the “other inhabitants” of the Generalgouvernement could participate in the postal service, but only at the Foreign rate. Stamps of the Reich were still authorized at that time.

Now that the Generalgouvernement had been declared as being an independent territory linked to the Reich, the Deutsche Post Osten had to issue its own stamps.

Since stamps for the Generalgouvernement had neither been printed nor even planned, the Deutsche Post Osten had to rely upon stamps of the German Reich Post. The much needed Hindenburg Medallion stamps were reprinted in Berlin and overprinted.

Several weeks later Polish stamp sheets in quantity had been requisitioned by Post Security personal in the Polish post offices, and the decision was taken to also overprint these stamps as a transitional measure until own stamps could be issued. The sheets were conveyed to the Staatsdruckerei Wien where they were overprinted. This is how the issue Mi# 14-39 came to be.

1.1 Hindenburg Medallion with Overprint “Deutsche Post Osten” (Mi # 1-13)

Date of issue: 1 and 4 December 1939
Perforation: 14:14 ¼
Gum: Ribbed or smooth
Valid until: 30.09.1940

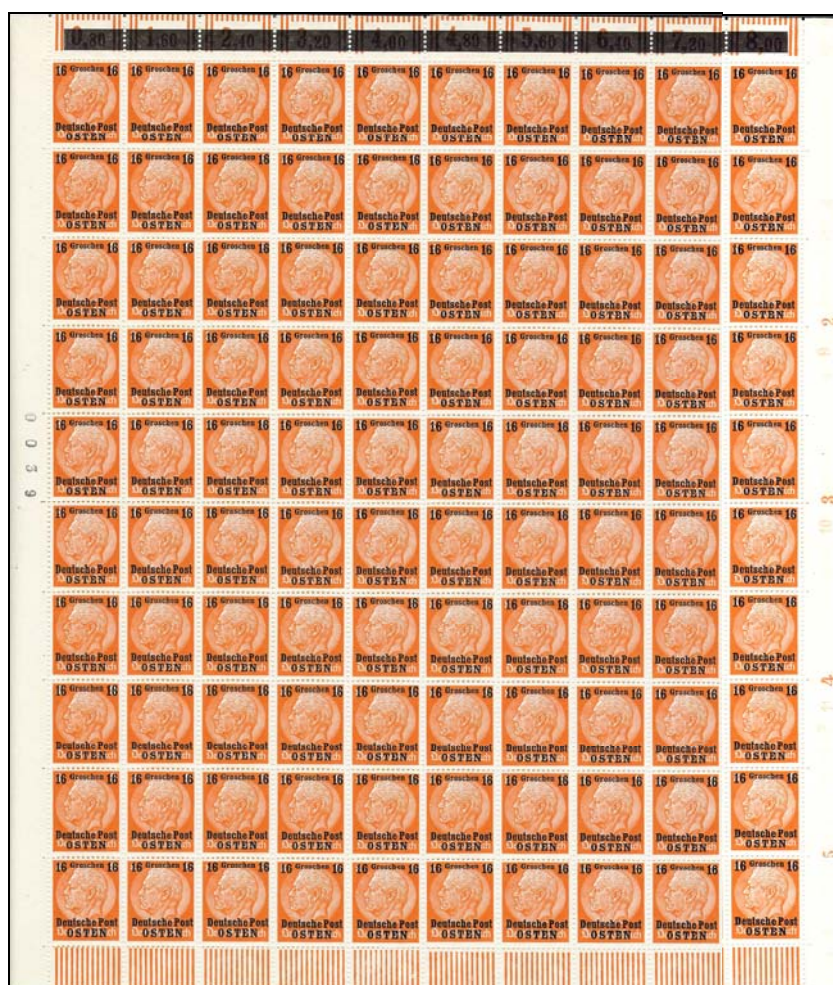
Description: German postage stamps issued as ‘Hindenburg Medallion’, German Reich Mi# 513/14, 516/525 and 528 with horizontal overprint in three lines, issued by the Reich Printing Office, Berlin: ‘Wertangabe/Deutsche Post/Osten’. The upper margin with the sum ciphers is overprinted with a line 6mm thick in the same colour as the overprint itself.

1.1.1 Stamps Issue



- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|---|-------|
| 1. | 6 Groschen on 3 (Pfg) | Dark brown-yellow (dyes) (1.12.)..... | (513) |
| 2. | 8 Groschen on 4 (Pfg) | Grey-blue to dark grey-blue (1.12.)..... | (514) |
| 3. | 12 Groschen on 6 (Pfg) | Bl-green to bl bluish-green (dyes) (1.12.). | (516) |
| 4. | 16 Groschen on 8 (Pfg) | Vermilion (dyes) (4.12.)..... | (517) |
| 5. | 20 Groschen on 10 (Pfg) | Red-brown-black red-brown (4.12.)..... | (518) |
| 6. | 24 Groschen on 12 (Pfg) | Medium-red to red.(1.12.)..... | (519) |
| 7. | 30 Groschen on 15 (Pfg) | Purple (4.12.)..... | (520) |
| 8. | 40 Groschen on 20 (Pfg) | Light blue (4.12.)..... | (521) |
| 9. | 50 Groschen on 25 (Pfg) | Bright violet-ultramarine (1.12.)..... | (522) |
| 10. | 60 Groschen on 30 (Pfg) | Dark olive-brown (1.12.)..... | (523) |
| 11. | 80 Groschen on 40 (Pfg) | Bright violet (4.12.)..... | (524) |
| 12. | 1 Zloty on 50 (Pfg) | Black blue-green/grey-black (1.12.)..... | (525) |
| 13. | 2 Zloty on 100 (Pfg) | Dark yellow-orange/grey-black (1.12.)..... | (528) |

1.1.2 The sheet



Mi # 4

Sheet with connection ciphers right and sheet number in the right margin.

The original stamps (Hindenburg Medallion) were printed with a rotary press. The printing plate consisted of 4 sheets of 100 (10x10) stamps each.

Sum ciphers on the sheet top are framed with stripes, in stamp colour, from the rotary press cylinder (Mi 12 and 13 have these in two colours). Depending on which printing press was used (there were several different ones) the sheet number with four ciphers can be found left or right.

Position of the stamp sheet within the printing plate

The stamp sheet's position within a printing plate can be determined with help of the coloured printer marks (PM) or the ciphers (connection-ciphers) in the margin.

Connection-Ciphers or Printer-Marks



Mi # 13 with PM 12 at the first perforation row, with two coloured cylinder print markings



Mi # 13 with PM 12 at the second perforation row, with two coloured cylinder print markings



Mi # 6 with PM 7 and connection-cipher 10 at the bottom of the right sheet margin.

Perforation and Overprint



The sheet has perforated top and bottom margins, and imperforate side margins (C-Perforation)

On the left side the connection-cipher 7 is positioned at the first perforation row. The other somewhat thicker cipher 7 on the left side, is the printer-mark (PM).

A single overprinting plate (10 x 10) was used to hide the sum ciphers in the top margin.

Sheet number



The sheet number can be found on the left or right side and in different printing styles due to the different machines used. (Mi # 5 with PM 3).

1.1.3 Peculiarities of the stamps



Mi # 6 missing (or part missing) value, blank impression.

The cause is a foreign body on the printing plate. Since this foreign body floated about during printing, there are several states of this flaw with printed and blank sections.

To date, only stamps from the first and second vertical sheet rows have been documented.

Shifted overprints are known from all values.



Examples:

Overprint shifted in different positions, some are so strongly shifted that the value figures are printed on the stamp next to it, or partly on the sides.

Owing to vertical shifting row # 10 has no facial value printed, and on all other stamps the value is on the stamp bottom.

First-Day covers

The following First-day issues to the SIEGER company are recorded:

Mi # 1, 3 and 13 with cancellation KRAKAU 1, Ub.: a dated 1.12.39-13.

Mi # 4, 8 and 11 with cancellation KRAKAU 1, Ub.: f dated 4.12.39-13.

1.1.4 Fakes/Forgeries



Beware of fake/forged overprints.

Here a forged overprint easily recognizable by the different letter types and an inadequate cancel.

1.2 Polish stamps with overprint „Generalgouvernement“ (Mi # 14-39)

Date of issue: 8/18 March 1940
Perforation: 12 ½ : 12 ¾ or 12 ¾ : 12 ½ (The original perforation has deficiencies)
Gum: Ribbed or smooth
Printing: Mi # 14-39: Original stamps: steel engraving/Overprint: typography
Mi # 35-39: Original stamps: typography/Overprint: typography
Valid untill: 30.11.1941

Description: Polish stamps with overprint from the Reichsdruckerei Wien:
“General-/Gouvernement (two lines), Eagle turned to the left and new facial value.

1.2.1 The original Polish stamps:

