



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>44,000 pcs</b>

**Obverse:** An image of three tanks. In top right, an image of the Eagle as the national emblem of the Republic of Poland. Below, inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA / POLSKA / 10 ZŁ / 2003. Under the Eagle's left talon, the Mint mark:  $\frac{M}{W}$ .

**Reverse:** A portrait of General Stanisław Maczek. On the left-hand side, a recognition badge of the First Armoured Division, and semi-circumscription: GEN. BRONI STANISŁAW MACZEK 1892–1994.

*Coin designer: Andrzej Nowakowski*



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>700,000 pcs</b>

**Obverse:** An image of the Eagle as the national emblem of the Republic of Poland, straddled by an inscription of the year of issue: 20–03, under the Eagle an inscription: ZŁ 2 ZŁ; and with the circumscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA preceded and completed with six pearls. Under the Eagle's left talon, the Mint mark:  $\frac{M}{W}$ .

**Reverse:** A portrait of General Stanisław Maczek. On the left-hand side, an inscription: GEN. BRONI / STANISŁAW / MACZEK / 1892–1994, two tanks below.

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

*Obverse designer: Ewa Tyć-Karpińska*  
*Reverse designer: Andrzej Nowakowski*

*Coins struck by the State Mint in Warsaw.*

*Printed by NBP Printing Office*

# Collector's Coins



On 7<sup>th</sup> May 2003 the National Bank of Poland, is putting into circulation collector's coins featuring General Stanisław Maczek, of the following face values:

- 20 zł – struck in silver, in proof finish,
- 2 zł – struck in standard finish, in CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy, the so called Nordic Gold

Stanisław Władysław Maczek, one of the most distinguished generals in the Polish army, was born on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1892 at Szczercz near Lwów. In the years prior to the outbreak of the First World War he read Philosophy at the Jan Kazimierz University of Lwów, and was a member of Związek Strzelecki, a Polish paramilitary liberation organisation. A reserve infantry officer (second lieutenant) in the Austrian army, he was called up in August 1914.

On completing a number of specialist courses, he was sent to a regiment of Tyrolese rifles, which was in active service on the Italian front as of December 1915.

In November 1918, with the disintegration of Austria-Hungary imminent, Lieutenant Maczek went to Cracow and joined the Polish Army, which was being created at that time. He was in active service in the fighting

against Ukrainian forces in Eastern Little Poland. On 14<sup>th</sup> November 1918 Maczek became the commanding officer of a company of volunteers from Krosno, and a few days later, along with other Polish units, set off for the relief of Lwów. He led a series of successful operations in the area of Chyrów, involving surprise assaults on the wings and rear of enemy forces. In May 1919 Maczek created the "flying company" of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

*General  
Stanisław Maczek*

His successes in the next engagements, the outcome not only of his leadership skills but also of his personal bravery, earned him promotion to captain. In the autumn of 1919 he was sent to the Operational Unit on the Volhynian front.

In 1920 Capt. Maczek took part in the fighting against the Soviet forces. In the summer of that year he organised the assault battalion of the First Cavalry Division, and was in command in its action against Budyonny's cavalry units at Oserdów and Waręż. The cease-fire of October 1920 which preceded the signing of the peace treaty of Riga between Poland and Soviet Russia (March 1921), marked the beginning of an 18-year period of peacetime service in Maczek's military career. He was awarded the Silver Cross of the Virtuti Militari Order and the Cross of Valour in recognition of his distinguished service in the fighting for independence and in defence of the Polish borders.

In 1922 Maczek was promoted to major. First he served in the chief-of-staff of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Lwów, and later assumed command of a battalion in the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. In 1924 he completed a further training course at the Military Academy, Warsaw. On receiving his diploma, Lieutenant-Colonel Maczek spent three years in command of the 2nd Division of the Chief-of-Staff in Lwów. In 1927–1929 he was deputy to the commanding officer of the 76<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in Lida, and subsequently (to 1935) was in command of the 81<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment in Grodno. In 1931 he was promoted to colonel, and in 1935 was appointed commanding officer of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Częstochowa.

In October 1938 Stanisław Maczek was given orders to take the command of the 10<sup>th</sup> Motorised Cavalry Brigade, the first major armoured vehicle unit in the Polish Army. He managed to overcome a series of problems involving organisation and training, and over the next months succeeded in co-ordinating all the component parts of the Brigade and prepare it for combat.

In September 1939 the 10<sup>th</sup> Motorised Cavalry Brigade was part of a formation called "Kraków" Army. Col. Maczek proved a highly able commander. Despite the huge preponderance of the German forces, he preserved the Brigade intact and successfully conducted rearguard and covering operations. The men of the 10<sup>th</sup> Brigade made a notable contribution to the fighting, especially in the opening days of September in the neighbourhood of Jordanów in the Island Beskid Mountains. The German 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division and 4<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Division sustained heavy losses and failed to get through to the rear of the Polish defence. Col. Maczek's unit fought in successive defence operations in the region of Rzeszów, Łańcut, Jarosław, Jaworów, Janów, and Lwów.

On 17<sup>th</sup> September Soviet forces invaded Poland from the east. Faced with this tragic situation and following orders from the Commander-in-Chief, Col. Maczek ordered his men to cross the Polish-Hungarian border. On 19<sup>th</sup> September the men of the 10<sup>th</sup>

Motorised Division entered Hungary, and were interned under the provisions of international law.

In October 1939 Col. Maczek managed to get to France. On orders from General Władysław Sikorski, C.-in-C., he took command of the Polish units at Cœtquidan. In recognition of his distinguished service in action during the campaign of September 1939, he was promoted to Brigadier-General and awarded the Gold Cross of the Order Virtuti Militari.

In February 1940 General Maczek set about the establishment of the 10<sup>th</sup> Armoured Cavalry Brigade, which was proud to continue in the tradition of the 10<sup>th</sup> Motorised Cavalry Brigade's glorious achievements during the defensive campaign of September '39. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to complete all the preparations and fully arm and equip the unit. In June 1940 a combat group selected from the Brigade was given orders to close up the gap between the retreating forces of the French 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Armies. In the neighbourhood of Champaubert and Montmirail Maczek's men conducted a number of local counter-attacks, for a time stopping the German units which endeavoured to get to the rear of the French forces. On the night of 16/17<sup>th</sup> June, in a surprise strike, Maczek's Brigade even managed to recapture Montbard.

After the fall of France, General Maczek and many of his men managed to reach Britain. There he set about the restoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> Brigade, in an effort to establish Poland's first armoured division. On 25<sup>th</sup> February 1942 General Władysław Sikorski gave the order for the formation of the First Armoured Division, which numbered 16 thousand men, 300 tanks, 473 guns, and 4 thousand motor vehicles. For the next two years General Maczek, the unit's commanding officer, was preparing his men for the invasion of the Continent.

In May 1944 the First Armoured Division was ready for combat. On 8<sup>th</sup> August, on reaching Normandy, the unit commenced combat operations east of Caen. This was when General Maczek said to his men, *And remember one thing. A Polish soldier fights for the freedom of many countries, but dies only for Poland.* In the days to come Polish soldiers were to play an important part in the Battle of Falaise, which the Allies won. Field-Marshal Montgomery described this battle saying that *the Germans were forced as if into a bottle, and the Polish division was the cork used to close it up.* During the fighting, at times very heavy and costing severe losses, Maczek's soldiers managed to control the area of Chambois and Mont Ormel, thereby preventing the eastward retreat of a substantial German force. In the course of this struggle, which lasted until 21<sup>st</sup> August, the First Armoured Division took over 5 thousand prisoners, destroyed 55 tanks, and over 200 other vehicles.

In the next months of the 1944/45 campaign General Maczek's men took part in the liberation of numerous cities, towns, and villages in France, Belgium, and Holland. The fighting for Axel, Breda, and Moerdijk made a permanent contribution to the

history of the Polish Army. The last episode in the First Division's wartime story was the capture of Wilhelmshaven, one of the chief Kriegsmarine bases.

On 20<sup>th</sup> May 1945 General Maczek assumed command of the First Corps in Scotland. On June 1<sup>st</sup> he was promoted again, and in September 1945 became C.-in-C. of all the Polish Army units in Great Britain.

Initially General Maczek intended to return to Poland after the war was over, but in 1946 the Communist authorities deprived him of Polish citizenship. It was secretly restored in 1971, but this was not disclosed until 15<sup>th</sup> March 1989, when the Round Table negotiations were in progress. After demobilisation General Maczek settled in Edinburgh in Scotland. The British authorities denied him an army pension, and as a result he had no income. Well-known for his pride and sense of dignity, the General refused to ask for help. He worked as a shop assistant, and later as a barman in a hotel. In outcome of an intervention by the Belgian and Dutch authorities the situation finally improved. General Maczek did not become involved in the political aspect of émigré life, but took an active part in the affairs of veterans and their organisations. He paid numerous visits to the places in Holland and Belgium for whose liberation the First Armoured Division had fought. He was always given a warm welcome by both the inhabitants and authorities. He also endeavoured to disseminate information on the Polish achievements on the fronts of the Second World War. In 1961 his memoirs were published in Britain, but it was not until after the demise of the People's Republic that they could be published in Poland.

In November 1990 President Ryszard Kaczorowski, last President of Poland in Exile, promoted General Maczek to the highest rank in the Polish forces (generał broni). On the hundredth birthday of General Maczek President Lech Wałęsa decorated him with the Order of the White Eagle.

Stanisław Maczek was also a knight of the Military Virtuti Militari Order (Third, Fourth, and Fifth Class), the Polonia Restituta Order (First and Third Class), the Cross of Valour, the Gold Cross of Merit, and many other decorations, including foreign ones. He was a holder of the Legion d'Honneur, the Order of the Bath, and the Distinguished Service Order.

General Stanisław Maczek died on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1994 in Edinburgh. In accordance with his last will, he was buried in the Polish Military Cemetery at Breda in Holland, among his men, the soldiers of the First Armoured Division.

Witold Głębowicz

Museum of Polish Armed Forces in Warsaw