Issuing collector items is an occasion to commemorate important historic figures and anniversaries, as well as to develop the interest of the public in Polish culture, science, and tradition.

Information on the issue schedule can be found at the www.nbp.pl/monety website.

Should you have any questions, please contact our consultants at the following phone numbers: +48 801 111 000 and +48 22 185 44 50.
The word legion (from Latin legio – draft) long ago has been permanently incorporated into the military vocabulary. Accordingly, it has also entered the Polish language, when following the partition of the Polish state among its neighbours at the end of the eighteenth century, Polish patriots repeatedly created military forces aiming at regaining the country’s independence. Those units attested to their readiness to fight for the motherland by adopting the proud name of a legion.

One of such formations were the Polish Legions, created on 16 August 1914 in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. As internal relations in that state liberalised at the beginning of the 20th century, Polish independence activists led by Józef Piłsudski were able to intensify their activities. They prepared for war against Russia, which they perceived as the main enemy in Poland’s quest to regain independence.

When in summer 1914 a pan-European war broke out, Piłsudski sent a small detachment of volunteers across the Austro-Russian border. He hoped that their presence would encourage the populace of central Poland to start an anti-Russian uprising but this plan did not materialize. The pro-independence cause was saved by the initiative of a coalition of Polish political parties in Galicia centred around the so-called Supreme National Committee. The committee established an organisational frame to channel the pro-independence zeal of Polish youth and upon the approval of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy it created a Polish formation to operate within the Imperial army but in own uniforms and under own leadership.

At the peak of their strength (1915) the Legions consisted of ca. 12 thousand soldiers and officers echeloned in three brigades. They fought in 1914–1916 on the Austro-Russian front, fighting several battles which went down in history as a symbol of courage and patriotic spirit that animated them. The total casualties in that formation amounted to ca. 15 thousand dead and wounded.

Although disbanded in 1917, the Polish Legions have remained present in the national memory. This presence is due to the legend created by poets, writers, painters and composers who fought in large numbers in the ranks of the Legions. The March of the First Brigade composed in 1914 has been the official anthem of the Polish Armed Forces since 2007.

Andrzej Chojnowski

On 5 August 2014, Narodowy Bank Polski is putting into circulation a collector note “The Centenary of the Formation of the Polish Legions” with the face value of 20 zł.

Face value 20 zł
Dimensions: 147.00 mm x 67.00 mm
Volume: up to 50,000 pcs

Note designer: Andrzej Heidrich

Issuer: NBP
The banknotes, commissioned by NBP, were manufactured by the Polish Security Printing Works (PWPW S.A).