

## OC-Occupation Stamps

### INTRO (EN)

Following the German declaration of war on Belgium on August 4, 1914, and the subsequent occupation of most of Belgian territory, postage stamps with a surcharge for the Red Cross were issued. Due to the war conditions, the printing of postage stamps no longer took place solely in Mechelen but also in London and Paris. During the war, no Belgian postage stamps were issued in the occupied part of Belgium; instead, the German occupiers introduced German postage stamps with the overprint "Belgien." In the philatelic world, these stamps are referred to as occupation stamps.

Both the series of overprints from 1914 and 1916 were initially valid for postage throughout the entire occupied area of Belgium and Northern France. However, with the issuance of the overprints for the 'Etappengebiet' on December 1, 1916, the two earlier series became invalid for that area starting December 15, 1916.

After the war, a new series appeared, the Liberation Stamps, which depicted King Albert I in military uniform, including a helmet. This type thus received the French designation série Roi Casqué.

On November 11, 1918, at five o'clock in the morning, the German capitulation was confirmed, shortly after the Weimar Republic was proclaimed in Germany. The Allies occupied parts of Germany, and in 1919, Belgian military units entered the Rhineland as occupiers. Later, from 1923 to 1925, Belgium also occupied part of the Ruhr area.

On September 20, 1919, postage stamps were made available for the Belgian troops, intended for the postage of mail to Belgium, Belgian Congo, and France, including the colonies. Belgian postage stamps were overprinted in black ink by the Stamp Printing Office in Mechelen with the texts ALLEMAGNE and DUITSCHLAND. For these overprints, the stamps featuring King Albert I and various subjects were used.

In 1920, the series was expanded with three new denominations.

In the overprint on the stamps of King Albert I, there is a variation: a small letter E at the end of the word ALLEMAGNE.

Additionally, there are two types of overprints for the values in Belgian francs.

Type I is the first printing that was made in 1919. Its characteristic is that the D of DUITSCHLAND is located approximately under the A and G of MAGNE, with a distance of two millimeters between the two words.

Type II, printed in August 1920, has the D of DUITSCHLAND exactly under the letter A of MAGNE, with a distance of one millimeter between the words.

From 1919 to 1930, the Rhineland province was occupied by Allied forces, divided into Belgian, British, and French sectors. From 1923 to 1925, Belgian and French troops also occupied the Ruhr area. In the areas controlled by Belgium, Belgian soldiers used their own 'occupation stamps.' The Belgian occupation of the Rhineland ended in 1926 (northern Rhineland) and 1929 (Aachen region). These postage stamps were valid for postage until April 30, 1931.

The overprint on the 1 Mark stamp was executed in two types.

In Type I, the value indication is placed lower in relation to the stylized flowers;

in Type II, the value indication is at the same height as the flowers.

Type I is also available in two perforation varieties: 14¼ x 14 (the most common) and 14¾ x 14 (the rarest).

The 6.25 franc stamp is also produced in two types.

In Type I, the letter B of Belgien is located directly under the number 6 of the value indication;

in Type II, the letter B is placed more under the letter F of franc.

Type II was only available at the philatelic counter of the main post office in Berlin and was not for sale in the General Government of Belgium.

Moreover, the 6.25 franc stamp was not widely available at post offices in the General Government of Belgium. The stamp was only offered at the counters of post offices in Antwerp, Mons, Brussels 1, Liège, and Namur. Anyone wishing to purchase the stamp through another post office had to first order it in Brussels, with prepayment of the amount due.