

Annexation and Dismemberment of Poland

The General Government Vassal State

Following the conquest, western and northern areas of Poland were annexed to Germany along with the formerly free city of Danzig (Gdansk). German place names replaced Polish ones. Nazi governor Hans Frank ruled the area of Poland (Kraków, Lemberg, Lublin, Radom, and Warsaw districts) that remained nominally independent called the *General Gouvernement*, taking the French name from an earlier historical period of Polish subjugation. Once all-out war began with the invasion of the U.S.S.R. in June of 1941, the General Government became a province of the German Empire.

A provisional issue of German stamps overprinted *Deutsche Post Osten* was issued on December 1, 1939, for use in the General Government, which remained valid until September 30, 1940. Provisional canceling devices also were used at first, as on the domestic mail 1939 Christmas post card (top item). A second provisional issue of Polish stamps overprinted *General Gouvernement* with Nazi eagle, wreath, and swastika insignia was issued in March of 1940. A regular issue appeared finally in August and September 1940. Standard circular cancels replaced the provisional markers; the second provisional and first regular issues remained valid as postage until July 31, 1941. The covers below show the progression, with provisional registry labels on the June 19, 1940 letter to the United States, and September 19, 1940, letter to Germany.

