The V- Symbols and Marks
(A Campaign)
In the General Government

1939 – 1945
(Handbook: H53E)

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The Handbook

Partitioning of the Handbook

This Handbook is divided into 5 parts.

- Part 1: Contemporary Publications
- Part 2: V-Symbols
- Part 3: Victory Marks
- Part 4: Victory Labels
- Part 5: Victory Cards

V-Symbol: “V” shaped sign in different colors applied by a rubber stamp, or in hand-writing.

Victory Mark: “Boxed” cancel with a “V” Symbol and a text.

The chapter about the Victory Cards contains Propaganda- and View Cards on which the V Symbol, or other Victory-Symbols are depicted.

Structure of the Handbook

In this new handbook, the V-Symbols are sorted by the District they were used in, and not anymore by their form. This will allow an easier identification of the V-Symbols. Within each district the V-Symbols will be classified by their form and the date of issue.

Some V-Symbols were used in several districts, these are listed at the beginning of each description.

All those V-Symbols which could not be clearly identified as belonging to the General Government were retrieved. This could sometimes happen, for example, with a Field post letter that could not be clearly identified because of a mute cancel or the Field post number being used outside the GG at the same time as in the GG.

Readers still working with the previous numeration will find a comparative list at the end of the handbook, listing all the former numerations and the new ones.

Description of the Symbols

\[
\begin{array}{c}
A \\
D \\
nn \\
Fo \\
Fa \\
\end{array}
\]

- Color
- Form
- Number
- District
- Type
Measuring the Symbols

Type

V = V-Symbol
S = Victory Mark
VV = Victory label
KV = Victory card

District

K = Krakow
W = Warsaw
R = Radom
L = Lublin
G = Galicia

Form of the Symbols

Form A: without serifs, stump at bottom
Form B: without serifs, pointed at bottom
Form C: with serifs, stump at bottom
Form D: with serifs, pointed at bottom
Form E: boxed
Form F: drawn
Colours of Symbols and Marks

Five colors were used: blue, green, red, black and violet. The colors often have different shades.

\[
\begin{align*}
&b = \text{blue} \\
g & = \text{green} \\
r & = \text{red} \\
s & = \text{black} \\
v & = \text{violet}
\end{align*}
\]

Shades E.g. = blue-black

Forgeries

The simple shape of the Symbols and Marks, as well as a lack of documentation on the manufacturers and the time stretch in which they were used, make these quite easy to forge and difficult to recognize.

See Chapter 13 „Forgeries and Questionable Marks.\]
The Origins of the V-Symbols Campaign

As we all know, the Latin word “Victoria” means Victory.

The “V” Campaign had its origins with the Staff of the Belgian BBC-Division. The letter „V“, accompanied by its acoustic sound im Morse Alphabet (●●●▬), Symbolised the soon to come Victory over Fascism.
It became the call-sign of British Broadcasting and, within just a few weeks, the “V” Symbol spread over all West-European countries under German occupation.

Britain’s Prime Minister Winston Churchill, issued his Propaganda services the order to launch a large scale V(ictory) Campaign. It was to begin on 20 July 1941.

This scheme, however, was rapidly discovered by German Intelligence, and the Reich Propaganda Ministry was tasked with organizing its own V(ictory) Campaign, one that was to begin, of course, before the British one. The short-notice for preparing this campaign is probably one of the reasons why no official publications on the subject have been found. There is actually only once short notice known, stating that on 10 July 1941 a very successful V-Propaganda Campaign, had taken place throughout all occupied countries. The Reich Propaganda Ministry had thus achieved its goal to forestall the British!

The V-Sign was to become the „German Victory Symbol“ in all of Europe.
The „V“ was omnipresent in everyday life, it was, for example, applied to buildings, printed and described in publications.

V-Symbols on boarded-up windows of a shop.

In philately these Symbols could be observed on cancels and labels coming mainly from the occupied General Government, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the Netherlands, Norway, and also with the field post. V Symbols were also often used on propaganda cards.

Field post letter with V advertisement.

Letter from Bohemia and Moravia with V-Symbol

Letter from occupied Norway with a V overprinted stamp and a V advertising cancel.

Letter from occupied Norway with V label and V-advertising cancel.
Britain and other countries also used the „V“ Sign on the mail, for their own purposes!

Letter from a Polish soldier in England with Victory label „Poland fights for Victory“.

Letter from Canada, with V cancel. (V and Morse Code)

In opposition with the other occupied territories, the General Government didn’t use any V Symbols as cancels, these were just struck alongside on the Cover.

Mostly the V Symbols were struck on covers in the office where they had been posted, rarely at the destination office, although it did happen. Many cancels used on mail, had been produced by “Private Hands” so to speak, in fact by Companies or Official Administrations.

This resulted in different forms and colors of the V Symbols, with or without serifs and even boxed Symbols.

The marks where a text was added to the V Symbol E.g. „Deutschland siegt an allen Fronten für Europa“, are called Victory Marks. These were also just struck on the cover and not on the stamps, in accordance with the GG policy in this matter.

V Symbols and Victory Marks were used in the General Government from June1941 till July 1943. Later Symbols are probably the result of private production, using up cards and covers dating from the beginning of the V campaign. Most Symbols are dated between July and August 1941.

Since the preparation time was very short, the manufacturing of the V Symbols lay with the users. They were simple, easy and quick to make, and cheap. Most of them were made of rubber, wood or cork; in the form of standard hand-cancel.
Due to their cheap standards, the se cancels could wear off pretty quickly, this of course has led to the numerous present day varieties, in size and inform.

Labels on Cover were hardly used in the General Government.

Even after the war the V Symbol was still used. It sometimes appears on stamps, like in this case.

![Official stamps of the German Reich overprinted with V-Symbol and Morse Code Local German Issue Saulgau.](image)
Contemporary Publications