Overrun Countries Series

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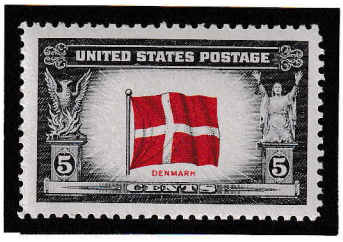
The Overrun Countries Series honors the 13 countries occupied by the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan before or during World War II. The 13 U.S. commemorative stamps have Scott US #909-921. All are a five-cent denomination which paid the international rate. The twelve stamps with European country flags were issued from June 1943 to December 1943. The final stamp from Korea was issued in November 1944. The 13 countries are (in order): Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania, Austria, Denmark, and Korea. The first six are on the left, the next six on the right, and the last one at the bottom middle. On the left of each stamp is a phoenix, the great bird of fire from Greek mythology, representing eternal rebirth. On the right is a kneeling female figure, with arms raised, breaking the bonds of oppression.

The stamps were printed by the American Bank Note Company of New York City because of the complicated full-color process. The frames were engraved while the centers used offset letterpress. All were done on a rotary press in plates of 200 subjects with four panes of 50. Numerous errors are known. The Philippines was to be honored but was liberated before the design was released.