

Malta Police badge worn on the ceremonial helmets of the mounted section

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Technical Details

Denomination	€2
Year of Issue	2014
Diameter	25.75mm
Weight	8.5gms
Alloy	cupro-nickel, nickel-brass clad nickel
Quality	Circulation
Mint	Royal Dutch Mint
Minting Limit	300,000
Design/Engraving *(National Side)*	Noel Galea Bason



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The Malta Police Force
1814 - 2014



Commemorative Coin

The Malta Police Force

200 Sena

Min-Nies Ghan-Nies

1814 - 2014

During the early years of British rule in Malta, justice was administered in conformity with the laws and institutions bequeathed by the Order of St John. However, the lack of an organised police force hampered law enforcement and the maintenance of good order.

The Treaty of Paris of May 1814 recognised British sovereignty over Malta. On 1 July 1814, the Governor of Malta, Lt General Sir Thomas Maitland, issued Proclamation XXII, which abolished the powers exercised in the administration of law and order. Instead, two distinct departments, the executive and the judicial police, were established to create a separation between the executive, legislative and judicial authorities. The executive police was given powers of arrest but persons could not be detained for more than two days before appearing in front of a magistrate. Colonel Francesco Rivarola, a Corsican, was appointed Inspector General of Police.

In 1836 a Commission was sent to report on the institutions and government of Malta. The Commissioners, John Austin and Sir G. Cornwall Lewis, stated that the police complement of 53 men, 24 of whom were unfit for service, was inadequate; thus, Maltese soldiers had to assist with police duties in Valletta. Subsequently, the police force was increased and by 1842 comprised 33 sergeants and 159 constables. There were 45 police stations on the island. The Governor of Malta, proposed a reorganisation of the police force and, in 1850, the British authorities announced an increase in the police complement. Enlistment had to be made at the lowest rank and promotion was based on merit and the ability to read and write in Italian.

Ordinance IX of 1885 introduced the first police law in Malta. It empowered the local government to appoint the Police Commander (Superintendent) and officers, and to issue regulations governing the police force. The Ordinance also established that members of the police force would receive a pension after 30 years' service.

Between 1891 and 1921 the police stations in 26 villages also served as postal agencies, selling stamps and with wall-mounted letter boxes affixed on the outside. Villagers could also collect incoming letters, which were displayed in glazed wooden frames inside the police stations.

During the First World War the police acquired new duties, such as the internment of enemy aliens, enforcement of censorship and custody of weapons confiscated from private individuals. On 11 January 1918 the title of "Superintendent" was abolished and substituted with "Commissioner" to bring it in line with other colonial police forces.

The social and economic hardship which followed the war led to the riots of 7 June 1919, during which British troops opened fire, killing four Maltese. In the words of the commission appointed to investigate the riots: "The Police Force proved to be a complete failure, the men being apparently in sympathy with the mob."

On 19 July 1919 Colonel H. W. Bamford was appointed Commissioner. He launched a programme of reforms. Some 89 policemen were discharged and replaced with literate recruits. A pay rise was also authorised. Later in 1919 the first police headquarters were set up at the former Valletta military hospital, also known as the Sacra Infermeria. In December 1919 a police training school was opened in the same building. Recruits underwent a 12-week training period, including drill, physical training, instruction in police duties and educational lectures. A medal for long service and good conduct was also authorised for the Malta Police. The Malta Police Band was formed in 1920. In August 1921 all policemen were issued with truncheons.

Malta was granted self-government in November 1921 and the police force became the responsibility of the Maltese Government. A detective branch, which was set up in July 1917, was renamed "Criminal Investigation Branch" in the 1920s and this was involved in countering Italian sponsored political and espionage activities during the 1930s.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, the Police Headquarters moved from Valletta to Vincenzo Bugeja Institute in Fleur-de-Lys. The police assumed war-related duties and started armed patrols. A Special Constabulary was formed in May 1940 to assist the police in its duties.

In 1947 Malta was given a new self-government constitution, which resulted in the Government assuming responsibility for the police. On 15 March 1954 the police moved to their present headquarters in Floriana. In May 1955 the Inspector General of Colonial Police, W.A. Muller, was invited to Malta to advise on improvements to the police force. Shortly after, in June 1956, the first policewomen were attested.

The period 1958-1959 was characterised by anti-British demonstrations and the quarrel between Dominic Mintoff, Maltese Prime Minister, and the Governor, Robert Laycock, as to who retained ultimate control of the police. In April 1958 the Maltese Government resigned and a year later the constitution was revoked. The 1961 Malta Police Ordinance vested control of the police in the Governor. This remained unchanged until August 1962 when constitutional amendments restored control of the police to the Maltese Government.

In 1971 the Malta Police joined Interpol. In subsequent years new sections, like the Criminal Intelligence Unit and the Mobile Squad, were introduced. By 1976 the Forensic Science Laboratory, the Scene of Crime Unit, the Fraud Squad and the Vice Squad were set up. More specialised units were set up to deal with an ever-changing crime scenario. In 2004 the Malta Police Act was amended to crystallise the role of the police within the ambit of fundamental human rights. The Act clearly sets out the mission and responsibilities of the Malta Police Force and sets limitations to its powers.

Today the Malta Police Force comprises about 1,900 members, some 850 of whom serve in districts. Malta is divided into ten districts, each of which comes under the supervision of a Superintendent. The maintenance of discipline is exercised by the Commissioner of Police; nevertheless, criminal acts and human right violations perpetuated by police officers are tried by the Courts of Justice.