

Vasyl Vyshyvanyi (born Wilhelm Franz von Habsburg-Lothringen, 1895–1948) was an Austrian archduke and a member of one of Europe's most illustrious monarchical dynasties. He was also a prominent Ukrainian military and political figure, diplomat, and a poet. His name is inextricably linked to the struggle for Ukrainian statehood – he was a colonel of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen legion and a defender of Ukrainian culture.

Born into the Habsburg family, Wilhelm grew up on the Adriatic coast in a multilingual and culturally diverse environment. From childhood, he traveled extensively and was interested in the history of European nations. As a young man, defying court rules, Wilhelm traveled incognito to the Ukrainian Carpathians, where he discovered the world of Hutsul customs, the language, and the spirit of freedom of the Ukrainian people. This journey forever changed his worldview and later decisively influenced his strong desire to become an active participant in the Ukrainian struggle not only for cultural identity but also for political independence.

During World War I, Wilhelm led a Ukrainian regiment within the Austro-Hungarian army. He became fluent in Ukrainian, studied Ukrainian history and traditions deeply, and combined a vyshyvanka – a traditional embroidered Ukrainian shirt – gifted by a soldier with his military uniform, turning it into a symbol of his personal dedication to Ukraine. When the Ukrainian People's Republic was experiencing a crisis of trust and authority, many saw him as a potential leader of the state. Thus, the figure of Vasyl Vyshyvanyi was born.

Commemorative coin

130 Years since the Birth of Vasyl Vyshyvanyi



After the defeat of the liberation struggle, Vyshyvanyi went to live in Vienna, and later Paris. In exile, he continued his diplomatic fight: he established contacts with the Ukrainian diaspora and with Western political circles, and sought allies among influential figures in Europe.

“To arms! To arms, riflemen! And save your native land! Rise up like faithful Cossack sons, Return home as heroes!” he wrote in his collection “Passing Days,” dedicated to the memory of his comrades-in-arms, the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen.

In the summer of 1947, the Soviet secret services kidnapped Vasyl Vyshyvanyi from a street in Vienna. Despite interrogations and torture, he did not renounce his convictions and spoke Ukrainian until the very end. Exactly one year later, he died in a cell at Lukianivka Prison in Kyiv. The location where his body was buried remains unknown. Today, the figure of Vasyl Vyshyvanyi is returning to Ukrainian historical memory as an example of an unbreakable will, profound dedication, and uncompromising service to the ideals of freedom – a freedom that requires a choice capable of changing the destiny of an entire nation.

Designer – Sviatoslav Ivanenko.

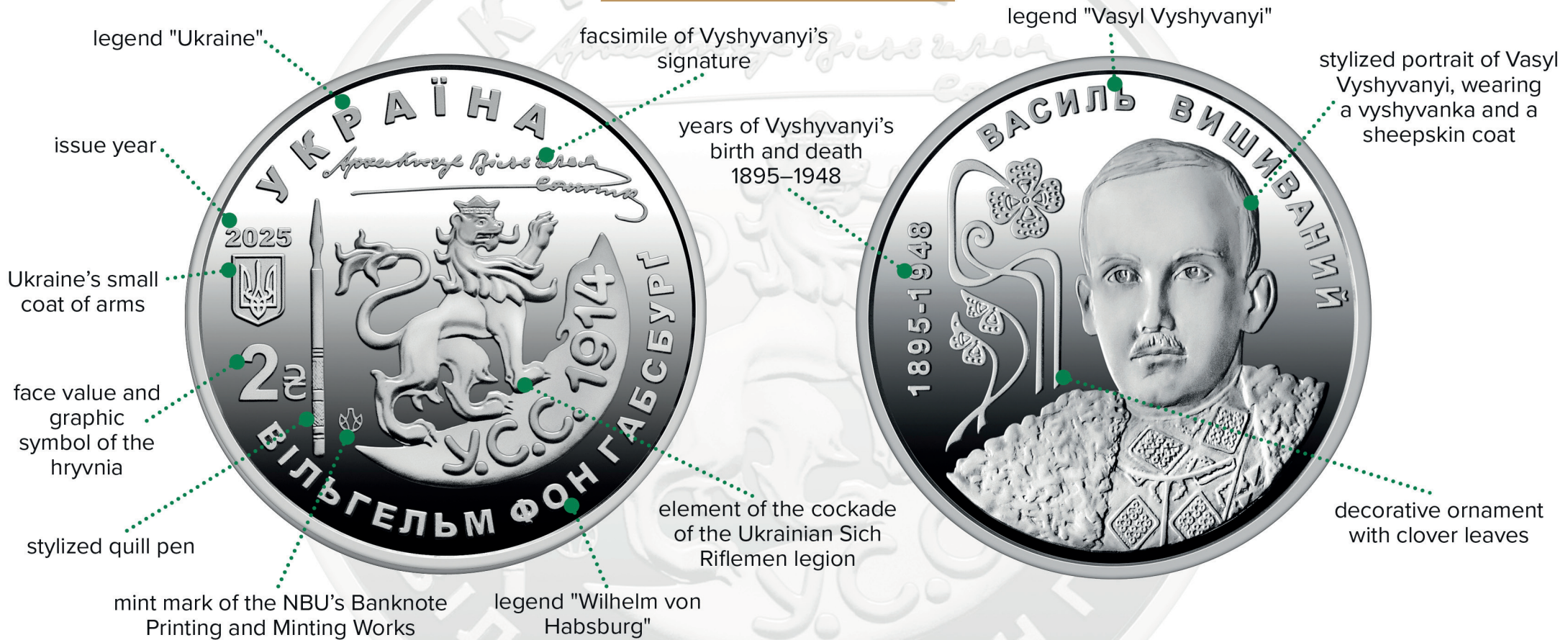
Engravers – Anatolii Demianenko and Volodymyr Atamanchuk.



National Bank
of Ukraine

130 YEARS SINCE THE BIRTH OF VASYL VYSHYVANYI

NATIONAL BANK OF UKRAINE



Issue date

22 August 2025

Metal

nickel silver

Diameter

31.0 mm

Quality

special uncirculated

Edge

grooved

Mintage

up to 50,000

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