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PRESS RELEASE

PHILLIPS GENEVA WATCH AUCTION: XXIII – VICTORY WATCH GIFTED TO CHARLES DE GAULLE AFTER WORLD WAR II

A One-of-a-Kind Agassiz Watch Co. World-Time Pocket Watch Made for Charles de Gaulle in 1945 to Commemorate the Allied Victory in World War II



GENEVA – 23 APRIL 2026 – On 9 & 10 May, Phillips in Association with Bacs & Russo will host its first live watch auction of 2026, the Geneva Watch Auction: XXIII. The sale will present more than 200 exceptional timepieces spanning over three centuries of watchmaking.

One of the most historically significant highlights is a unique Agassiz Watch Co. world-time pocket watch created in 1945 and presented to General Charles de Gaulle to commemorate the Allied victory in World War II.

In the closing months of the war, a group of prominent Geneva citizens led by Ernest Baumann commissioned a series of commemorative watches to honor the leaders of the Allied powers. Produced in secrecy and completed in time for Christmas 1945, four pocket watches were created for the principal statesmen associated with the Allied victory.

Each watch was personalized to reflect the nation and symbolism of its recipient. U.S. President Harry Truman received a piece featuring the Statue of Liberty, with an hour hand shaped as an olive branch symbolizing peace. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin's watch depicted an industrial worker before a steel mill, with the hour hand in the form of the five-pointed communist star. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was honoured with an image of St. George slaying the dragon, accompanied by a trident-shaped hour hand.

The present watch was gifted to General Charles de Gaulle of the Free French Forces and features a polychrome cloisonné enamel dial depicting Joan of Arc, France's patron saint. She stands planting a staff bearing the Cross of

Lorraine, the emblem of Free France during the resistance. The Cross of Lorraine also forms the distinctive shape of the hour hand. In the background, a sailboat and warship appear peacefully on the horizon, symbolic of both conflict and the hope for peace following the war's end.

The enameling was executed by Michel Deville of Maison Stern, following extensive design development recorded in the Stern archives. Each watch shares a common caseback design engraved by master engraver Edgar Maerky: a large "V" for victory overlays a map of the globe. Beneath it, each watch carries a personalized dedication. The present example is engraved "1939 – General Charles De Gaulle – 1945."

The watches were powered by the world-time system developed by Geneva watchmaker Louis Cottier, whose invention in the early 1930s made it possible to display the time simultaneously across the globe. The complication was chosen deliberately to reflect the global nature of the conflict and the international cooperation that brought it to an end. Cottier himself participated in the project.

Few timepieces capture a moment in world history as vividly. Created to commemorate the end of humanity's most devastating conflict and presented to the leaders who shaped its outcome, the present example is both a technical achievement and an extraordinary historical artefact.

Preserved in remarkable condition, the watch retains its pristine cloisonné enamel dial and sharply engraved caseback. The presence of French import marks further confirms its delivery to General de Gaulle.

The Phillips Geneva Watch Auction: XXIII will take place on 9 & 10 May 2026 at the Hôtel Président Wilson in Geneva, offering collectors an exceptional selection of historically important and rare timepieces.

ABOUT PHILLIPS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BACS & RUSSO

The team of specialists at Phillips Watches is dedicated to an uncompromised approach to quality, transparency, and client service. Phillips in Association with Bacs & Russo holds the world record for the most successful watch auction, with its Geneva Watch Auction: XIV having realized \$74.5 million in 2021. The annual total for watch auctions in 2025 exceeded \$290 million, marking the first time any auction house's Watches department has surpassed \$200 million in annual sales for five consecutive years.

Record-breaking prices include:

1. Paul Newman's Rolex "Paul Newman" Daytona reference 6239 (CHF 17,709,894 / US\$17,752,500) – New York Auction: Winning Icons – 26 October 2017 – Highest result ever achieved for any vintage wristwatch at auction.
2. Patek Philippe reference 1518 in stainless steel (CHF 14,190,000 / US\$17,631,075) – Watches: Decade One (2015–2025) – 8 November 2025 – Highest result ever achieved for a vintage Patek Philippe wristwatch at auction.

ABOUT PHILLIPS

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium; prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium.*

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