

# Post office won't get more Highway of Heroes coins

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COBOURG - Thousands of Highway of Heroes commemorative coins are still available for purchase, but not through Canada Post.

The \$10 silver coin, which sells for \$70, was launched Oct. 31, 2011 in Trenton. Twenty dollars from the sale of each coin will be shared between the Afghanistan Repatriation Memorial and the Military Families Fund.

The coin commemorates the spontaneous outpouring of support by ordinary Canadians lining highway overpasses from Trenton to

Toronto to show their respect and gratitude for members of Canada's military who died in service overseas.

Since the coin was launched, \$163,100 has been raised for both charities.

Approximately 100 coins have been sold at the Cobourg post office, but when asked last week if they had more, staff said they were sold out and were unable to get more.

Christine Aquino, director of communications for the Royal Canadian Mint, said Canada Post only orders a certain amount from the Mint.

"They are now sold out at those locations and they will not be sending any more to

their outlets," she said.

Canada Post sold 2,500 coins and will not be re-ordering any more as there is only so much space in their outlets and they are into the 2012 mintage now, spokesman John Caines said.

But Alan McLaren of Peterborough, whose son Cpl. Mark McLaren was killed Dec. 5, 2008 when his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan, said the Royal Canadian Mint and Canada Post could do more to support the sale of the coins.

"The Highway of Heroes coin is an exemplary example of patriotism Canadians have shown, but the promotion of

this coin shows the Mint's lack of proper support for such an iconic symbol," he said.

"Government support showing Canadians, how they care and what they are doing, appears to be in short supply these days."

Aquino said that, in an attempt to help with sales of the coin, the Mint is offering free shipping as of Monday.

The coin is selling "fairly well," she said.

The Highway of Heroes coin has a mintage of 25,000. Nearly half of them have been sold, more than two thirds in Ontario.

It is unknown how the Mint will get the message out to

Canadians beyond Ontario about the free shipping for the coin. While numerous ads have appeared on national television promoting other coins launched by the Mint, Aquino said there won't be any ads for the Highway of Heroes coin.

"The key difference between the Legendary Nature coins that people are seeing advertised on television and the Highway of Heroes coin is the Legendary Nature series is a circulation program," she said.

"We are mandated to let Canadians know when there is new change — new coins — in

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## ■ COMMEMORATION

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their pockets."

Aquino said the national television ads let people know the circulation coins are legal tender.

"We don't typically do advertizing with a collector coin," she said.

But if people don't know the Highway of Heroes coin is available, how will they know to purchase one, or that there is free shipping? asks McLaren.

"We were hoping to see ads for this prestigious coin, yet my wife and I have not," he said.

"This coin encompasses the amazing feeling the citizens of this country have for their men and women in uniform.

Proper advertizing would have yielded a different outcome of the sales of this coin."

The Highway of Heroes coin will be available for eight more months, and Aquino said that while the Mint is looking at "different ways" to get the word out to other areas of the country, "mass advertizing for a collector coin is not typically something that we do."

Minted coins are sold for a one-year period before they are discontinued.

Quinte-West Mayor John Williams, who was instrumental in encouraging the Mint's involvement with the Afghanistan Repatriation Memorial, said he was surprised to learn the coin is only available for one year and dis-

appointed Canada Post has stopped selling the coin.

"I didn't know it was only available for a year and I didn't know that about the Post Office," he said.

"The whole idea is to get the message out to the entire country to get the support for the coin."

Without a national ad campaign, Williams said, it will be hard to let Canadians know about the Highway of Heroes coin.

The McLarens believe it's time the Mint and the Post Office put forth an effort to let Canadians know about the coin which honours both fallen soldiers and ordinary people who have stood on bridges in support.

"Canadians have not been properly made aware of this amazing tribute Highway of Heroes coin," Alan McLaren said.

"The Government of Canada, the Royal Canadian Mint and Canada Post need to step up and actively show its support for this Highway of Heroes coin.

"I'm sure our son Cpl. Mark McLaren, M.M.V. (Medal of Military Valour) and all that gave their lives would agree with me and say, 'Let the true colours of our Canada be seen, a maple leaf with support from both sides.'"

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## ■ SERVICE CLUB NEWS

# Guest speaks about vision of Lions Club

CRAMAHE TOWNSHIP - Members of the Colborne and District Lions Club welcomed Zone chair Harm Zylstra to the regular meeting on Feb. 20. Zylstra was introduced by Lion Paul Anstee and thanked by Lion Fran Anstee.

Zylstra spoke on the Vision of the Lions International president Lion Wing-Kun Tam. As the president of the largest service club in the world, his vision is based on three beliefs. He believes that Lions can: strengthen and retain our membership by taking care of fellow members as if they were family; expand their service to new heights, propelled by a special campaign to plant one million trees; and nurture our future by involving more young people and Leos in all that we do.

Zylstra pointed out that the goal of a million trees has already been passed, with six million planted already in this Lions year and the planting season hasn't even started in North America.

He complimented the Colborne club on its many and varied activities, on the fun and fellowship and on the interesting programs that they have been having at their regular meetings.

During the regular meeting, plans were finalized for the Health and Wellness Fair which was to be held last Friday in the Keeler Centre. The Lions will be carrying out Vision Screening in the four schools in their area: Grafton Public School, St. Mary's Separate School, Colborne Public School and Northumberland Hills Public School. Lions Eileen Coombs and Cathy Galt reported on the Haystack Dinner in the Keeler Centre to be held on the evening of Saturday, March 31, 2012. It is shaping up to be a fun-filled evening with dinner, entertainment and a dance all for \$25.00.

The next dinner meeting will be at the Legion starting at 7 p.m. Guests are always welcome.



Submitted photo

(From left) Colborne and District Lions Club president Brenda Dohla and Lion Fran Anstee thank Zone chair Harm Zylstra for speaking at the Feb. 20 club meeting.