

48th Veteran of Second War featured by Canadian Mint

In recognition of “The Year of the Veteran” the Canadian Mint struck a quarter with the images in profile of two veterans of the Canadian Forces. The veterans selected were the 48th Highlanders’ Herb Pike representing the veterans of The Second World War and Angela Mondou as a Peacekeeping veteran. A 10 Dollar Fine Silver collector coin is also available from the mint, one of which was purchased by the OCA and will be on display in the 48th Museum.

The quarter was circulated in the latter half of 2005. At the same time the Mint ran a commercial that included veterans from the major branches in the Canadian Armed Forces and different periods of service. Herb and Angela were featured with their photographic images morphing into the engraved images on the coin. RSM Doug Chappelle was also front and centre in the commercial marching proudly toward the camera. The artist who engraved the image for the coin replaced Herb’s glengarry with the more generic beret of the Armed Forces and if you look closely both cap badges have been replaced as well.

With the collector coin the mint included a Certificate of Authenticity and a moving description of the service and sacrifice that the coin honours. Extracts read:

To go wherever we’re needed...

To do whatever is asked of us.

A son leaves for duty, a mother weeps. Through sorrowful tears, a sister whispers “goodbye,” knowing she will break her promise and also leave home. She too feels driven to serve.

Across Canada, this scenario played out in countless homes as two World Wars and the Korean War stirred a great sense of humanity in the hearts of Canadians. Many felt compelled to act, to rush to the aid of the oppressed and join the fight for freedom.



Angela Mondou and Herb Pike in profile



These were the times that bravery and self-sacrifice found their true definition. The soldier’s ability to find courage in the depths of despair is a concept that is difficult to conceive in the comfort of modern freedom. It is a virtue that must never be forgotten – one that deserves open respect and admiration. Honour those who willingly chose to serve – Canada’s heroes of the past, present and future.

Herbert James Pike, today’s President of the 48th Highlanders Life Members, joined the Canadian Infantry Corp in 1942 at the age of 18. He was following a family tradition of service. His father, also Herbert James, had served in The First War in the artillery. He was part of George Drew’s battery (subsequently Premier of Ontario) and won the MM as a Sergeant and the MC as a Captain.

“I was badged 48th from the beginning,” Herb says proudly. Following basic training in Guelph he did advanced training in Stratford staying on several months as an instructor. From there he was transferred to Ipperwash as Battle Drill Instructor. In mid 1943 he left for England, arriving in Aldershot just after the regiment had departed for their landing at Pachino in July. Herb followed quickly, sailing to Philipville in Algeria to the 1st Reinforcement Group then on draft to the front to join the 48th Highlanders in October, just after the battalion took the town of Campobasso. Joining as a Corporal (although he had been a Sergeant at Ipperwash) Herb became part of Able Company, being promoted to Sergeant following the December battles of Cemetery Hill flanking Ortona. He remained with Able in Italy as the battalion fought through the Liri Valley, the Hitler Line, The Gothic and Rimini Lines and the Lamone River crossing. He was transferred to C Company as CQMS just prior to the battalion leaving Italy in March 1945 and remained with them through The Netherlands. Herb returned home with the 1st Battalion on 01 Oct 1945.

In recalling these years Herb stated quietly, “These were some of the best years of my life, with guys that I will never forget.” In The Year of the Veteran, the Canadian Mint asked all Canadians to “never forget”. To those of us fortunate to know Herb, and the other veterans of our regiment, it will be our privilege to carry out this request.