

OTTAWA, Nov. 22, 2013 /CNW/ - A century after intrepid explorers set sail from Victoria, BC to study Canada's Western Arctic and deepen the world's understanding of life in the Canadian North, the Royal Canadian Mint has launched two 25-cent commemorative circulation coins to celebrate both the 100th anniversary of this historic expedition, as well as the cultures and traditions which continue to thrive in our Arctic regions. The coins were unveiled today in Victoria, BC and in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut.

"Canada's North is a fundamental part of our heritage and national identity and is vital to our future," said the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council. "Our Government encourages Canadians to take this unique opportunity to discover the North's history, culture and peoples by collecting the Royal Canadian Mint's new circulation coins commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Arctic Expedition and celebrating the way of life still thriving across Canada's northern regions."

"The Royal Canadian Mint is proud to circulate coins which give Canadians a new way to appreciate the people, places and events which have shaped Canada as we know it today,"

said Ian E. Bennett, President and CEO of the Royal Canadian Mint. "As one of the greatest adventures of the early 20th

century, the Canadian Arctic Expedition sparked many discoveries about life in the North and we are pleased that our new circulation coins help Canadians learn even more about the Arctic's past and present, as well as its unique Aboriginal cultures."

As of today, a total of 25 million 25-cent commemorative circulations coins will begin circulating via the Mint's national coin distribution network. 12.5 million coins feature artist Bonnie Ross' illustration of explorers preparing to take their first north-bound steps into uncharted territory 100 years ago. Another 12.5 million coins celebrate "Life in the North" through the rich symbolism created by Kinngait (Cape Dorset), NU artist Tim Pitsiulak.

Please see attached backgrounder for further information on these coins.

About the Royal Canadian Mint The Royal Canadian Mint is the Crown Corporation responsible for the minting and distribution of Canada's circulation coins. An ISO 9001-2008 certified company, the Mint is recognized as one of the largest and most versatile mints in the world, offering a wide range of specialized, high quality coinage products and related services on an international scale. For more information on the Mint, its products and services, visit.
www.mint.ca

Images of the Mint's new commemorative circulation coins are available by visiting <ftp://communications:RCM2007@ftp.mint.ca>

Backgrounder

2013 25-CENT CIRCULATION COINS:"100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CANADIAN ARCTIC EXPEDITION" AND "LIFE IN THE NORTH"

One hundred years after Canadian Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden despatched explorers and researchers on an ambitious mission to map the Canada's Western Arctic and study its peoples, wildlife and geology, the Royal Canadian Mint is proud to celebrate the centennial of the 1913 Canadian Arctic Expedition as well as the cultures and traditions which continue to thrive across the North today.

This historic expedition was led by ethnologist Vilhjalmur Stefansson and zoologist Rudolph Anderson, whose teams split into a Northern Party, headed by Stefansson to undertake the bulk of the mapping exercise, while Anderson's Southern Party explored the geology, flora and fauna, and native inhabitants of the Arctic Mainland. After travelling thousands of kilometres by sea, the Northern Party studied new islands and charted land which even local inhabitants had never seen. The Southern Party compiled 14 volumes of scientific data and gathered thousands of natural specimens and cultural artifacts, which for the first time opened the eyes of the world to the culture and way of life linking the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories, Yukon Territory, Alaska and Siberia.

The Expedition's artifacts, photos, and recordings have formed the basis of numerous educational programs and museum exhibits and remain important pillars of the permanent National collections of the Canadian Museum of Nature and the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

The 2013 25-cent circulation commemorating 100 year-old Canadian Arctic Expedition was

designed by artist Bonnie Ross. The reverse of this 1913-2013 dated coin shows three explorers posing before a fully-packed dog sled as they prepare to take their first northward steps into uncharted territory. The background of this scene is filled with the details of a compass rose, pointing northwards to show their intended destination.

A celebration of the traditions and cultures which still endure in today's North are found in a 25-cent

circulation coin designed by Kinngait (Cape Dorset

), NU artist Tim Pitsiulak. His richly symbolic vision is rendered in classic Inuit art style to represent "Life in the North" as seen by its inhabitants. The central design feature of this coin are a pair of Beluga whales and a Bowhead whale; common to Arctic waters and vitally important to the Inuit way of life.

The Bowhead whale on this coin has been transformed into a canvas displaying multiple facets of Inuit culture and history. A large Dorset Culture ivory mask on the dorsal part of the bowhead whale and smaller depictions on its lower jaw represent the Tuniit (paleo-Eskimos) which migrated from Siberia across the Bering Straight into North America

. An *amauti*

design on the tail represents hooded clothing worn by Inuit women, while an *igloo*

pattern adorns its mid-section and the

Thule

ivory comb on its head symbolizes Inuit expansion across Canada

. This scene is encircled by the silhouette of a breaching whale being pursued by a traditional whaling boat and kayaks along the coin's rim.

12.5 million examples of each theme will enter general circulation as of November 22, 2013. Each will be available in two combinations of frosted accents in mintages of 6.25 million coins for each frosting version. All 25 million coins in this commemorative program also feature the effigy of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II by Susanna Blunt on their obverse.

Canadians can start looking for these new coins in their change, attend coin exchanges at

special events in select locations across Canada, as well as at the Mint's Ottawa, Winnipeg and Van

couver

boutiques, or obtain limited quantities through an online coin exchange at

www.mint.ca/arctic

(limited to

Canada

only). While supplies last, a free collector card will shipped to each household participating in the online coin exchange.

Canadian Arctic Expedition collector coins also available

Tim Pitsiulak's "Life in the North" design can also be found on a \$3 Fine Silver collector coin with contrasting frosted finishes. This precious metal collectible is limited to a mintage of 10,000 coins world-wide and retails for \$34.95 CAD.

Bonnie Ross' Canadian Arctic Expedition design also appears throughout the family of 2013 Silver Dollar products, which includes the Proof and Brilliant Silver Dollars, as well as the 2013 Fine Silver Proof Set and Specimen Proof Set. A different Bonnie Ross artwork honouring the 100

th

anniversary of the expedition is also found on the 2013

\$100

gold coin. Details on all these products are available at

www.mint.ca

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SOURCE Royal Canadian Mint

Image with caption: "Royal Canadian Mint Board of Directors member Claude Bennett and Cap e Dorset NU

artist Tim Pitsiulak unveil new

25-cent

circulation coins celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Arctic Expedition and Life in

the North at Mullin Illihakvik Elementary school in
Cambridge Bay, NU

(CNW Group/Royal Canadian Mint)". Image available at:

http://photos.newswire.ca/images/download/20131122_C4143_PHOTO_EN_33767.jpg

Image with caption: "Canadian Museum of Nature Research Associate Dr. David Gray, Royal
Canadian Mint President and CEO

Ian E. Bennett

and Member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Alberni James Lunney unveil new

25-cent

circulation coins celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Arctic Expedition and Life in
the North at the Greater Victoria Public Library (CNW Group/Royal Canadian Mint)". Image
available at:

http://photos.newswire.ca/images/download/20131122_C4143_PHOTO_EN_33768.jpg