

Austrian Commemorative Coins Honoring Armed Forces Depict BLACK HAWK Helicopter In Rescue Role

Stratford, Connecticut - The Austrian Mint in Vienna has issued silver and copper 5 euro coins struck with an image of a Sikorsky BLACK HAWK helicopter in a life-saving role to commemorate this month's 60th anniversary of the Austrian Armed Forces (Bundesheer). The Bundesheer operates nine BLACK HAWK helicopters to perform homeland security, disaster relief, firefighting and international peacekeeping missions. Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation is a subsidiary of United Technologies Corp. (NYSE: UTX).

"We congratulate the Bundesheer for 60 years of meritorious service to the Republic of Austria, and we thank the Austrian Mint for illustrating the BLACK HAWK helicopter so beautifully on these commemorative coins. This is indeed an honor," said Caroline Vandedrinck, European Regional Executive for Sikorsky Defense Systems & Services. "Our founder, Igor Sikorsky, always envisioned vertical lift machines employed as life-saving tools for the benefit of humankind."

Both nine-sided 1.12-in (28.5mm) diameter coins depict on their obverse side the face value of 5 euros encircled by the shields of the nine federal provinces of Austria. The reverse side shows a BLACK HAWK helicopter hovering in place while army personnel hoist a rescued person into the aircraft. The same side features an armed Austrian soldier wearing a beret with the army crest, the words "60 Jahre Bundesheer," the anniversary dates 1955/2015, and "Schutz und Hilfe" (Search and Rescue).

To many Austrian citizens, BLACK HAWK aircraft have come to illustrate the success of their armed forces, which have become well recognized for their role in avalanche and flood relief across the Austrian Alps, firefighting missions, and NATO peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and Bosnia.

"The Federal Army has repeatedly and successfully used BLACK HAWK helicopters for numerous rescue missions within Austria," said Bernhard Urban, Austrian Mint Product Manager. "Because of this all-around pivotal role in the country, the Austrian Mint selected it for the coin."

The modern Austrian Armed Forces were formed in 1955 following the May 15 signing of the Austrian State Treaty, which declared Austria a peaceful, independent and democratic country. American, French, British and Soviet occupying forces departed the country the same year after 10 years of occupation in the aftermath of World War II. The country adopted permanent neutrality as part of its constitution later the same year.

The Republic of Austria became the first European country to acquire BLACK HAWK aircraft after purchasing nine S-70[™] helicopters for the Bundesheer during the early 2000s. The aircraft are configured with digital avionics, a nose mounted weather radar to help pilots navigate safely in winter conditions, and landing gear with skis.

BLACK HAWK helicopters are used extensively by the U.S. military and 28 countries for multiple mission roles. Working with militaries worldwide, Sikorsky continues to develop new mission systems and capabilities for the newer digital variants.

According to the Austrian Mint, which issued the commemorative coins on May 6, the silver coin contains 0.28 ounces (8 grams) of fine silver with a fineness (purity) of .800 (on a scale of 0 to 1.000). The silver coin is vacuum sealed and presented in a colorful blister pack with information in English and German.

The Mint is issuing a maximum of 50,000 silver coins to collectors — each coin costs 15.40 euros. None of the silver coins will enter general circulation.

Collectors in the United States and Canada can purchase the commemorative silver "Austrian Army" coin from the Austrian Mint, www.austrian-mint.at. The copper coin will enter general circulation in Austria.

"While several countries have released postage stamps featuring Sikorsky airplanes and helicopters, to the best of our knowledge this is the first minted coin showing the BLACK HAWK helicopter," said Dan Libertino, President of the Sikorsky Archives, which preserves the company's history.

Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., based in Stratford, Connecticut, is a world leader in aircraft design, manufacture and service. United Technologies Corp., based in Hartford, Connecticut, provides high-technology systems and services to the building and aerospace industries.

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