

ANA PARTICIPATES IN CALIFORNIA GOLD STRIKING CEREMONY; RECEIVES PIECE FOR MUSEUM

A gold \$50 commemorative piece, struck from recovered treasure from the 1857 shipwreck of the SS Central America, was given to the American Numismatic Association (ANA) Money Museum by the California Gold Marketing Group.

"I was honored to represent the ANA at the first day of striking of these beautiful pieces and am pleased to have one of these historic commemoratives for inclusion in the Association's Money Museum," says Executive Director Edward C. Rochette.

The California Gold Marketing Group and the California Historical Society (CHS) are striking the commemorative pieces at San Francisco's Presidio from gold taken from ingots made in the City by the Bay in the mid-1850s by private assayers and minters Kellogg & Humbert. The 25-day striking period for the commemoratives coincides with the August 20 to September 12, 1857, journey of the precious metal, in coins and ingots, from the California gold fields to its sinking aboard the SS Central America in a hurricane off the coast of the Carolinas. The gold, originally destined for New York, was recovered in the late 1980s; and in late 1999, more than 90-percent of it was bought by the California Gold Marketing Group.

Mintage of the commemorative is limited to 5,000 pieces. Featuring gem proof finish, they are struck from transfer dies recently created by the Gallery Mint from original dies used by Kellogg & Co. to strike \$50 gold pieces in 1855. The obverse features James B. Longacre's Liberty design that the United States Mint employed on \$20 gold coins in the mid-19th century.

Like the reverse of the Kellogg piece, the modern commemorative features an eagle perched on a rock and holding a shield. A blank ribbon runs through the eagle's wings on the original. However, to avoid the possibility of confusing the new issues with one of Kellogg's original gold pieces, the ribbon on the modern commemoratives is inscribed "S.S. CENTRAL AMERICA GOLD/ C.H.S." Also, each piece is over-stamped on the reverse, giving the date of the striking.

Encapsulated by the Professional Coin Grading Service (PCGS), each commemorative piece is fitted in a custom display case modeled after the packaging for the U.S. Mint's 1915-S Panama-Pacific commemorative coins. The new pieces are listed as "commemorative restrikes" in the latest edition (2002) of A Guide Book of United States Coins.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the modern commemoratives - up to \$250,000 - is earmarked for the historical society for continued research on the 1849 California Gold Rush.

The commemorative piece donated to the ANA will be displayed at the Money Museum in Colorado Springs, Colorado, with a genuine 1857-S double eagle (\$20) recovered from the

SS Central America (presented to the ANA last year by the California Gold Marketing Group) and an 1854 Kellogg & Co. \$20 gold coin (donated to the ANA by the late Aubrey and Adeline Bebee).

For more information about the availability of the new California gold commemorative pieces, contact Bowers and Merena Galleries of Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, telephone 800/458-4646 or Web www.bowersandmerena.com; Monex Precious Metals of Newport Beach, California, telephone 800/489-0839 or Web www.monex.com; or Universal Coin & Bullion of Beaumont, Texas, telephone 800/459-2646 or Web www.ucb4coins.com.

The American Numismatic Association is a congressionally chartered nonprofit educational organization dedicated to encouraging people to study and collect money and related items. The ANA helps its 28,000 members and the public discover and explore the world of money through its vast array of education and outreach programs, as well as its museum, library, publications, conventions and seminars. For more information, call 719-632-2646 or go to www.money.org.