Canada Recognizes Wallenberg's Heroics

On January 17 Canada Post commemorated Swedish-born Raoul Wallenberg, who, in 1985, was designated Canada's first honorary citizen.

During the Second World War, in Budapest, Hungary, Wallenberg saved the lives of more than 100,000 Jews, before disappearing into Soviet custody in 1945 at the age of 32.

In recognition of his efforts, the Canadian government made the Swedish-born Wallenberg Canada's first honorary citizen in 1985, and designated January 17, the day of his disappearance, as Raoul Wallenberg Day.

Jim Phillips, Director of Canada Post's Stamp Services notes, "As an international citizen, Wallenberg is recognized the world over as a hero. We're highlighting his place as Canada's first honorary citizen as well as his heroic achievements that earned him that distinction." The stamp is appropriately denominated at Canada's international mail rate ($1.85Canadian).

"Raoul Wallenberg is a true hero," said Minister of State (Transport) Steven Fletcher. "This stamp offers one small way to show that we have not forgotten the incredible and indomitable bravery he showed in the face of tyranny."

"Historical stamp releases are a way to recognize the inspired accomplishments of those Canadians—in this case an honorary Canadian—who sought to serve and better humanity," stated Canada Post president and CEO Deepak Chopra. "With this stamp, we hope to shine a light on Raoul Wallenberg's heroic story, including the sacrifice he made to save others."

Among his many creative efforts to save lives, Wallenberg invented a special pass called a Schutz-Pass that he designed with Swedish colors and symbols. Under increasingly dangerous circumstances, he handed it out indiscriminately to Jews, which helped protect them from deportation to the death camps.

The Schutz-Pass alone is believed to have saved up to 20,000 lives. The stamp features an image of the Schutz-Pass and Wallenberg's 1944 passport photo and a photo of Hungarian Jews rescued from deportation thanks to Wallenberg's efforts.

What happened to Wallenberg after the war remains unknown. On January 17, 1945, the Soviets took him into custody for unclear reasons, and his friends and family never saw him again. Inquiries into his fate continue to this day.