



For immediate release

Disabled vets 'Soldier On' to raise funds in grueling five-day auto rally

Acura Dealers of Canada sponsor Acura TL rally car

OTTAWA (August 18, 2010) – Two disabled Canadian Forces heroes, severely wounded in the war in Afghanistan, have their sights set on raising \$150,000 to help with the rehabilitation of their injured comrades by completing the rugged five-day, 2,000-kilometre Targa Newfoundland international car rally in September, Canada's longest and toughest motorsport event.

Master Corporal Jody Mitic and Corporal Andrew Knisley have committed to raise money for the Soldier On Fund, a trust fund of the Canadian Forces established to improve the quality of life of ill and injured soldiers through active participation and peer interaction in fitness and sports.

Both men suffered devastating injuries in combat that have left the pair with just three arms and one leg between them. They credit the Soldier On program with contributing to their remarkable recovery.

Mitic, of Brampton, Ontario, and Knisley, a native of London, Ontario, have prosthetic lower limbs and will drive a new Acura TL SH-AWD performance-luxury sedan sponsored by the Acura Dealers of Canada in the grueling week-long event that crisscrosses eastern and central Newfoundland. The car is showroom stock with the exception of rally timing components, high-performance tires and wheels, and added safety features such as a roll cage.

The two soldiers hope the money they raise for the Soldier On Fund can help injured Canadian Forces personnel to not only enhance their rehabilitation through participation in sports and physical fitness, but to achieve some of their life's dreams irrespective of their injuries.

The team is encouraging Canadians to contribute to Soldier On through tax-deductible donations made to the organization's website, www.SoldierOn.ca. Other fund-raising activities are also planned.

"Andrew and Jody are remarkable individuals on a very important mission – to raise funds for the injured soldiers who follow their path to recovery through sports, fitness and competition," said Jerry Chenkin, executive vice president of Honda Canada Inc. "They are an inspiration, and it is an honour for all of us at Honda Canada and for our Acura dealers across the country to help make this possible. What they have achieved already is amazing, and what they plan to achieve in the name of their comrades is heroic."

The Targa project is managed by Major General (Ret'd) Lewis MacKenzie with engineering support from retired Transport Canada executive Nigel Mortimer, winners of their category in the 2004 Targa Newfoundland.

"When Jody and Andrew came to me with the idea of competing in Targa as a fund-raiser, it brought together so many of the ideals that underpin Soldier On – determination, discipline, stamina and new skills – combined with the challenge of an event that is extremely demanding even for able-bodied competitors," explains MacKenzie. "I believe we can raise significant funds to help the ill and injured soldiers served by the Soldier On program as well as showcase the kind of recovery that this program can make possible."

MacKenzie has raised the expense money to field the team through sponsorship from private and corporate sources. All of the money donated to the Soldier On Targa Newfoundland project will go to the Soldier On Fund.

Targa Newfoundland is one of three internationally recognized Targa rallies. Multi-day endurance contests, Targa events use a series of timed, closed road, high-speed special stages where each vehicle competes against the clock as well as against other vehicles to determine class and category winners. Targa events take their name from a motoring competition first staged on the Italian island of Sicily in the 1900s. Targa means plaque or plate in Italian – the award for success in the event. The other recognized Targa events are staged in Australia and New Zealand.

Called “the iron-man of motorsports,” the 9th annual Targa Newfoundland will start with preliminary activities in St. John’s on Saturday, September 11, 2010, and end back in the capital on Saturday, September 18, after covering more than 2,000 kilometres of the island’s twisty, challenging roads. More than 2,200 volunteers from 70 communities help organize the annual event.

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