



Toronto Military Show

Returns to Etobicoke Olympium

by Peter Suci

After two years, the Toronto Military Show West was back in its longtime home at the Etobicoke Olympium this past March. The venue was closed for more than a year for renovations that will make it ready for the upcoming Pan Am Games. Now, however, is back hosting one of Canada's leading military collectible shows.

While the show's organizers ensured that the 'show would go on' at the nearby Hansa House banquet center in 2014 it was far from ideal for a regional collectibles event. "It wasn't large enough and we are happy to be back at the Olympium," said show promoter Angela Koszuta. "Many vendors also commented about being happy to be back in the hall."

While certainly not of the scale of Show of Shows (SOS), MAX, or even many larger regional shows in United States, the Etobicoke show makes it up with its level of enthusiasm from dealers and collectors alike. In fact, there were "early bird" attendees lining up and eager to get in at the 6:30am dealer set up.

More than 150 tables were filled with militaria ranging from medieval Saxon arrow heads to some current issue Canadian equipment that is being used in far off con-



The Etobicoke Olympium might not offer the show organizers much room for growth but the show truly had something for everyone.



(ABOVE) If you ever needed a Canadian cap badge this was the place to find it.



(LEFT) A fantastic World War II era Canadian Royal Air flight grouping with original jacket and helmet.

licts such as Afghanistan, and everything in between. Canadian militaria from World War I and World War II was fittingly present – notably as this part of the nation raised units that went off to fight in both wars.

With attendance high, the venue became crowded soon after the doors opened at 8:30am. "While the Olympium is pretty much at capacity – we do sometimes have a waiting list for tables – another venue of its size or slightly larger, in a reasonable price range, with ample parking and easy highway access is very hard to find, as we learned last year," Koszuta told *Military Trader*. "We're always looking for ways to make the shows better, so new options are always be-

ing looked at, but we have been at the Olympium for close to 15 years now. We are very well known for that show. It is where it all started and is still our most popular venue.”

Many of the show’s vendors have been attending the Etobicoke show since it first began, and even stuck through the temporary move to the smaller venue. Everyone was happy with the move back to the Olympium.

As for attendees, Koszuta said they do come from all over Canada. One notable attendee was advanced Canadian headdress collector and author Clive Law, who told this reporter that he drove five hours one way, leaving at 6am to arrive at the show by 11am. After a few quick passes it would be a return trip of five hours – but worth it for Law and his son, who were happy to find treasure that they can only find at this show.

Other attendees came from near and far and sales seemed brisk with money changing hands and many happy faces leaving the Olympium. “We had a great show on Saturday (March 21), with high attendance and reports from vendors was that business was strong,” said Koszuta. “It seems that military collectibles are still doing very well and we’ve definitely noticed some new and younger faces coming out to the shows, which are a necessity for the health and growth of the hobby as a whole, and have also registered quite a few new vendors who are now joining us on a regular basis. All good for growth of the hobby!”

In addition to the three Etobicoke shows that occur every March, June and September, Koszuta also promotes two shows a year in Oshawa, just east of Toronto, at the General Sikorski Hall. That show she added tends to get a slightly different crowd, which offers the Canadian vendors two regions and a good number of annual shows to set up at.

“Basically, we really try to manage a well run, affordable show, and to do our best to listen to comments and concerns from



Vintage military posters seldom seem outside (or even in) many museums decorated the walls of the Olympium.

both our loyal vendors and the public that attend,” Koszuta told *Military Trader*. “We really appreciate those of them who have helped to make the Toronto Military Show the successful event that it has become over the years. They’re the ones that make it a great show and that drives the public through the door.” ☺



Ron Wolin

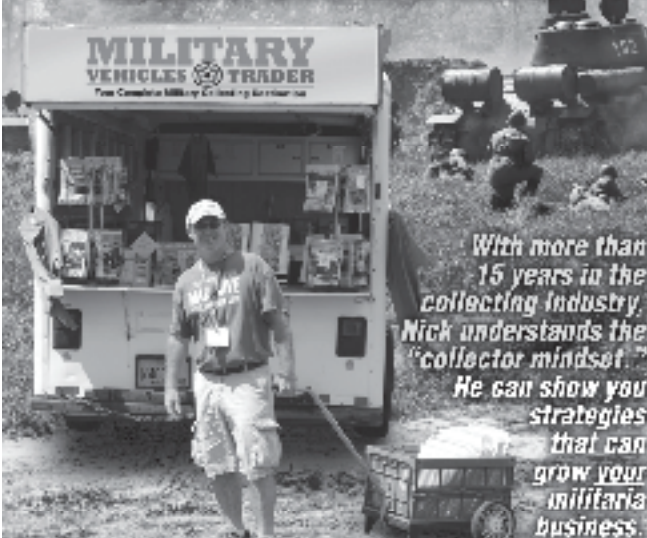
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