



Anywhere in the world, you're bound to see tables full of military helmets — Toronto is no exception.



A familiar sight worldwide: dealers and collectors digging deep in the bins for treasure.

tors through the door," Angela explained. "Our Toronto West Etobicoke show is a bigger venue. We usually have between 150-180 8-foot tables there. While the Oshawa venue is smaller, it still holds a solid 100-120 tables. Most of the dealers are from Ontario and Quebec with occasional (dealers) coming in from Calgary, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. But we've also had vendors from the U.S., Europe, the U.K., and Asia set up."

It often attracts a number of collectors (including this reporter) who cross the border and make the trek north to attend, but she admitted that the trouble of clearing customs can be a problem, especially in the post-9/11 era. Weapons and ordnance aren't the kinds of things most American collectors can bring back home — but there is much in the way of other treasures.

The Toronto Military Show is a very Canadian affair, not just in regard to the dealers, but also in what they are selling. Canadian World War I items are especially sought-after, but so too are Canadian World War II items.

"The commitments from both British and French Canadians in defense of their mother countries were very significant in both World War I and World War II," Angela noted. "This support has received little official or media attention outside of Canada, hence the interest and enthusiasm for one's own history."

The collectors buying these items are quite diverse these days, and reflect the diversity of the Toronto region.

"Obviously, militaria is a niche market, but we have seen a growth in younger clientele, including regulars now coming with their school-age kids, teachers coming with students, and even cadet groups," said Angela. "With the population growth happening in Toronto and the surrounding area that's what we would hope for. We've also noticed more interest from women, in general, as well as a trend in father/son collecting teams."

While the Toronto Military Show has grown to six shows that is probably enough for now, but this promoter told Military Trader anything is possible.

"We get requests regularly from people asking for a show in their area but usually it's just not feasible," she added. "Being accessible via major highways is crucial."

However, by being in Toronto means that visitors from further afield can make a day trip of it, and she said there is always another reason for American collectors to consider a trek to their northern neighbor. "Our low dollar right now is a definite plus for anyone coming from the U.S. but I suppose that's obvious." ❄️

and collectors alike, who simply know her as "Angela."

"A good friend started the show close to 20 years ago, and when he was ready to move on, I stepped in," she told *Military Trader*. "We then expanded with the Oshawa location about five years ago. Both have been going strong since. We have an 'east' show and a 'west' show. Geographically, they are only about an hour away from each other: one right in Toronto and the other just east of the city."

There are a few other shows in Canada, but most collectors will agree that Angela's shows are the ones worth making a long haul to attend.

"There is some overlap with the vendors but what we've found is that each show gets a completely different group of public visi-



It isn't just Canadian items north of the border. This table shows some diverse headgear from around the world.

# Militaria North of the Border

The Toronto Military Show continues to grow

by Peter Suci

While there are those who say there are simply too many shows these days causing both dealers and collectors to experience "show fatigue," this certainly isn't the case in Canada. The Toronto Military Show has actually expanded to six events for 2019, with two shows to be held in the eastern suburb of Oshawa (January and November), while four others (March, June, September and December) will be held in the western suburb of Etobicoke.

These one-day only shows see the dealers set up at 6:30 am, public in at 8:30 am and the whole affair wrapped up by 2 pm. The abridged schedule, which ensures that the afternoon isn't spent in the hope for last minute arrivals, also means that there is a serious rush early, but the crowds never really "thin out."

Credit is due to show operator Angela R., who has been running this tight ship since 2007 with no signs of slowing down. Instead, the demand from collectors has been such that she's increased the number of Etobicoke shows. As a woman promoter in a male-dominated hobby, she has earned the respect of the dealers



(ABOVE) With more than 150 tables there is a lot to take in at the Toronto Military Shows.

(TOP) While not to the scale of a large American show there is always a lot of treasure to be found at Angela R's shows.