

VGCA Gun Show Displays – Spring 2025

One of the many areas that distinguish our gun shows from others in the region are our educational displays. Indeed, these displays embody a fundamental element of the VGCA's primary objective, which is "to encourage and both advance and enhance the collection of firearms of historical, cultural, and artistic merit. Achievements that increase gun-collecting knowledge and public appreciation of our national firearms heritage shall be recognized." VGCA members put together four excellent firearm displays that were judged, scored, and rewarded. The overall results were:

1st Place: "Carbines of WW II" by Rob Becker

2nd Place: "Carcano Rifles" by Louie DiGaetano & Troy Blackwood

3rd Place: "Colt SP1 Sporter Rifles" by Shannon Zeigler

Judges' Choice: "Muzzle-loaders from 1775-1885" by Mike Jambrosic



Rob Becker's display of "Carbines of WWII" (*above*) consisted of nine different model carbines from the seven major combatants of the Second World War. It included a description of exactly what defines a "carbine", period photographs of carbines in use during the war, a comparison of each carbine with its nation's service rifle(s), and the background of each example in the display.

Included in the display (*counter-clockwise starting at the top center*) were:

- M-1 Carbine (United States)
- Enfield No. 5 Mk I "Jungle Carbine" (United Kingdom)
- Type 38 Carbine (Imperial Japan)
- Type 44 Carbine (Imperial Japan)
- Modello 38 Carcano Carbine (Italy)
- Berthier Modele 16 Carbine (France)
- Model 44 Mosin-Nagant Carbine (USSR)
- Model 38 Mosin-Nagant Carbine (USSR)
- Gewehr 33/40 "Mountain Carbine" (Germany)



In addition to his display taking First Place and earning the associated \$300 prize, Rob's G33/40 Mountain Carbine took the honors in the "Best Military Firearm" category. VGCA Vice President George Dungan (*far right*) is shown handing Rob Becker his First-Place prize.



Our resident experts on all things Italian, Louie DiGaetano and Troy Blackwood, put together an excellent display showing the evolution of the M1891 Carcano rifle from its adoption in 1891 through its final model in 1941 (*above*). This display showed every model adopted in all three of the major patterns: long infantry rifle, cavalry carbine, and special trooper's rifle. Standout examples include M38 TS in 8x57 Mauser made using leftover German production parts, an M38 rifle captured by the Greeks, and a Japanese Type I Carcano/Arisaka hybrid.

Troy Blackwood (*near right*) and Louie DiGaetano (*middle right*) seem pleased to receive their well-deserved 2nd Place prize of \$200 from VGCA VP George Dungan (*far right*).



Shannon Zeigler's "Survey of the Colt AR-15 SP1 Sporter Rifles from 1964-1984" display (*above*) featured examples of Colt ARs from 1964 to the 1983-4 Electroless Nickel model. In addition to the seven displayed SP1s that covered all the major production changes, there was an equally impressive collection of early Colt optics, slings and Colt 20-round magazines. The Electroless Nickel rifle is a scarce highly coveted collector's item (this one was Gary Latta's collection). His 1966 production gun has an affidavit from a Wisconsin sheriff's department and a Colt factory letter confirming the affidavit. Shannon's display earned him (*far left*) the third-place prize of \$100 from VP George Dungan.



Mike Jambrosic put together an impressive display titled “Muzzle-loaders from 1775-1885” (*at left*). All his examples were beautiful, but his set of 18th century flint dueling pistols were magnificent and earned the “Best Antique Firearm” award.

The last display was of “Competition Guns of the North-South Skirmish Association” (*below*) by Jim Burgess (*below right*). This display has been presented before so it was not judged, though it was no less educational and sparked interest in the N-SSA.

Well done, everyone!

