

VGCA Gun Show Displays – Fall 2025

The opening lines of the VGCA By-Laws state “The objective of this Association, as a not-for-profit association, 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.” A key element of our advancing and enhancing firearms collecting and recognizing achievements that increase firearms knowledge are the educational displays at our gun shows and judging and rewarding those displays of an exceptional nature. This gun show representing yet another opportunity to do so.

There were four very good displays and the judges’ scoring was very close. The displays were recognized as follows:



In **First Place** was the display of a Swedish m/40 rifle (*above*) by Marc Gorelick (*at near left, receiving his awards from VGCA President Rob Becker, far left*). This was a superb example of a single firearm display and featured a beautiful example of a rare WWII-era rifle. The Swedes ordered a small number of



K98s from Germany and when they were received, modified them to fire the 7.9x63 cartridge (vice the standard 7.9x57 Mauser round). They were issued to troops manning the m/36 medium machine gun in the same caliber, as well as those manning the m/42 20mm anti-tank cannons. The majority of these were sold to Israel after WWII and

subsequently modified again, this time to 7.62x51 NATO. It is rare to find one of these rifles in its original 7.9x63 caliber, and condition of this particular example is truly exceptional. In addition to earning first place in the judging, this rifle also received an award as the Best Military Arm on display at the show. Well done, Marc!

Garnering **Second Place** was what show attendees referred to as the “Wall of Berettas” – an incredible display entitled “Beretta – 500 Years of Passion and Excellence” (*above and below left*) by Troy Blackwood (*below right, in the center*) and Louie DiGaetano (*below right, far right*). This display described the entire five centuries (as of 2026) of Beretta firearms and exhibited the most significant rifles, handguns, and shotguns of the cartridge era. It was very impressive! In addition to winning second place, Troy’s Vetterli Model 1870 converted to training rifle chambered in .22 LR was awarded Best Antique Firearm of the show. Congratulations, gentlemen!



Third Place went to Mark Tatum and his friends (*at right*) display titled “WWI Allies in the Trenches” (*above*). In common with the Wall of Berettas, this display included rifles, handguns, and shotguns (in this case, of French, English, and U.S. origin) but also non-firearms, including helmets, binoculars, trench knives and trench art! Nicely done, sirs!



Finally, Shannon Zeigler’s display of WWII Japanese Type 99 machine gun and Type 89 grenade launcher (*left*), though not officially judged as he has displayed these items in the past, earned a **Judges Choice Award**. Thank you, Shannon!