

MAGYAR FRONT

The MHBK Vancouver Chapter's Hungarian Militaria Supplement to the 'Hadak Útján'.

May - June 1999

Militaria Display at the Hungarian Hall

By Peter Czink



I thought that the annual 'Open House' at the Hungarian Hall on June 6th, 1999 would be the perfect opportunity to display part of my collection of Hungarian militaria. I had two reasons for wanting to put on this display; first of all I wanted to promote our newly re-formed Vancouver Chapter of the Hungarian Veterans' Association. Secondly I hoped that such a display might interest others; bringing to life old relics, often only read about in history books. The display turned out to be a great success. Very much interest was shown from young and old alike – our display, along with tables of Hungarian porcelain, antique dolls, and excellent Hungarian food, kept the hall packed with happy people.

I would like to thank all of you who came, your support was greatly appreciated. Special thanks go to **Lorraine Weideman**, **József Pataky**, and **Arran Saul** who helped with the display. Also to **Jürgen Kaminski** who kindly took all of these photographs.



The first glass display case contained items primarily from the First World War. They included aviation badges, decorations from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, W.W.I veterans' memorabilia and a beautiful medal group recently donated by **Károly Borbás**, editor of the **Hadak Útján**.



The second case featured W.W.II artefacts. Air force items, including a rare Hungarian Air Force NCO's dagger were displayed along with medals and badges from the army and the Levente Youth.



The centerpiece of the display was the combat uniform of **Major-General Kálmán Török**. This highly decorated soldier finished the First World War as an Infantry Captain. During the year of 1938 he acted as Chief of the Wartime Organisation Office in the Ministry of Defence. From February of 1940 until August of 1941, **Török** was in command of the 12th Infantry Brigade.

On July 1st 1940 he was promoted to Major-General, and retired in November of 1941. He remained in reserve until the end of the Second World War.

All of his decorations were displayed on his tunic. They include the 'Middle', Officer's and Knight's Cross of the *Hungarian Merit Order*. The display was complete with a very rare officer's parade helmet.

In the centre of the display was a small stand with a plastic copy of a World War II Hungarian helmet. Several years ago, during a visit to Hungary, I stumbled across the meeting place of the **Doni Bajtársak Szövetsége** (*The Don River Veterans Association*). The Hungarian Army suffered tremendous losses on the Don River, and the few men who remained are very close today. They welcomed me into their group with open arms. I think of these heroes fondly, and as I reflected on their hospitality and graciousness, I couldn't help but think of how much easier life is here in Canada. I decided to make this little 'donation helmet' for them. I want them to know we are thinking of them.

I was thrilled to find **\$145.65** in the helmet at the end of the day. I hope that they will find this little sum useful.





While planning this display, I decided to put together an interesting variety of military items. Although most of our members are very well versed in our nation's military history, and a more academic selection would have been all right; I wanted everyone who was at the Open House to enjoy it. Variations and obscurities that would stimulate the historian and collector may have been a little dry for most onlookers. I chose some of my most visually stunning pieces; for example the General's Parade Attila in the right of the photograph below. A small collection of helmets from the First and the Second World War, including an Air Raid and Fireman's helmet can also be seen.



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