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CGSC art, gifts on display in Lenexa

The free exhibit, entitled "The Art of War, Gifts of Peace," is open to the public and will be on display through April 28.

Christopher Burnett | Staff Writer

The Command and General Staff College Foundation is hosting a free public reception from 6-8 p.m. tonight to celebrate the exhibit of selected pieces from the CGSC art and gift collection at the art gallery within the Lenexa, Kan., City Hall.

The free exhibit, entitled "The Art of War, Gifts of Peace," is open to the public and will be on display through April 28.

Judy Tuckness, Lenexa Arts Council curator, said among the exhibit's featured items are several helmets and other military headgear that were presented as gifts to CGSC. She pointed out a plumed helmet from the United Kingdom Life Guard officers of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment on display, which had a plaque stating it was a gift to CGSC in May 2008 from a British Army Maj. Mark Berry.

"The free public reception on Thursday will include a brief overview by military experts about the selections on display from the art and gift collection of CGSC at Fort Leavenworth," Tuckness said. "Curators for the CGSC Foundation from the Weiner Gallery looked at our space, then decided which specific pieces to install here from their sizeable collective of more than 3,800 items."

Igor Sinyavskiy, City of Lenexa facilities manager, is a native of the Ukraine and recognized one of the helmets on display. He said it brought back memories.

"When I saw this Nationale Volksarmee (former East German army) helmet, I was very impressed. I thought, 'How (did) this piece end up on the other side of the planet' because there are not many left in the world today," Sinyavskiy said. "This helmet reminds of my mandatory time serving in the Soviet Union army from 1984 to 1986. We did cross-training with the East Germans and I saw those guys wearing this helmet."

Doug Tystad, chief executive officer of the CGSC Foundation, said the collection was established during World War II, and the primary purpose of the exhibit is to engage neighboring communities and build awareness. He said CGSC has been educating military officers since 1881, and international military officers began attending the college in 1894.

"The idea of exhibiting items from the CGSC art and gift collection came about during a visit to the college by the directors of the Todd Weiner Gallery from Kansas City," Tystad said. "We first worked together on an exhibit that featured an item from each decade. This exhibition is intended to let the general public see these items. The ultimate goal is to eventually curate free traveling exhibits featuring items from the collection toward our effort to enhance awareness."

Poppy DiCandeloro, an adjunct professor in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, served as project manager for the Todd Weiner Gallery.

"I came on board after the partnership between the CGSC Foundation and the Todd Weiner Gallery was established," DiCandeloro said. "The general public was not aware of this collection until then. The City of Lenexa exhibit represents only the second time items from this collection will be displayed outside of the military post at Fort Leavenworth."

The CGSC Foundation was established Dec. 28, 2005, as a tax-exempt, non-profit private corporation with the mission of supporting the college in three overall areas: scholarship, outreach and soldier and family support. To learn more about the CGSC Foundation and its mission, visit www.cgscfoundation.org.

The Lenexa City Hall art gallery at 12350 W. 87th St. Parkway hosts rotating art shows monthly. Exhibits are coordinated by members of the Lenexa Arts Council and highlight works created by local and regional artists. It is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and closed holidays. For more information, contact Denise Rendina at (913) 477-7527 or e-mail drendina@lenexa.com.



PHOTO/ PRUDENCE SIEBERT, FORT LEAVENWORTH LAMP

J.R. Campos, facility foreman with Lenexa Municipal Services, and Igor Sinyavskiy, facility manager with the City of Lenexa, look at a display of hats from Colombia, Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia and Nepal, part of the "Art of War, Gifts of Peace" exhibit, Feb. 28 at Lenexa City Hall. The exhibit is hosted by the CGSC Foundation and runs through April 28. The public is invited to a free opening reception from 6-8 p.m. tonight (March 2) at 12350 W. 87th Street Parkway in Lenexa. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

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