

Tanks, tanks and more tanks

Thousands turn out for Nokesville event

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS
 >> BY CAMERON DELEAN
 cdelean@insidenova.com

The hot temperatures and beating sun last weekend didn't deter thousands of visitors from checking out the annual Tank Farm open house in Nokesville.

The Americans in Wartime Experience event showcased military tanks, armored vehicles, K9 demonstrations, veteran interviews, historical displays and more on Saturday and Sunday.

"It was a great success and people loved it," said Dennis Brant, CEO of the organization. "Everybody that came out was just so patriotic, there were a lot of veterans and a lot of people who just love what the heck we're doing and cheered us on to continue doing it."

The organization has over 150 tanks in its arsenal, with the oldest dating to 1917, when it was built for World War I. Over 50 vehicles were on display with an additional dozen demonstrated throughout the weekend. Parents were as giddy as their kids interacting with the displays.

"My husband is a veteran; he brought our son here last year and he loves the tanks, he's obsessed," said Amy Hedden of Midland, who attended the event for the first time, along with her two daughters. "It's amazing, and we were so excited to see the helicopter."

The Boeing CH-47 Chinook is a tandem-rotor helicopter and is among the heaviest lifting Western helicopters. It was a fan-favorite at Tank Farm with hundreds lined up throughout the weekend to take a look inside.

Tanks and tents were manned by historical reenactors wearing period-accurate military uniforms who gave facts about the vehicles and how they were used, but many of the event's attendees were already well-versed on the historic machinery.

"I used to study U.S. history, world history and military history, and in studying them you see how eventually weapons have a tendency of progressing as do tactics and strategies too. Where they had chariots pulled by one or two horses, now we have these monsters," said Tom Andrews of Fairfax while admiring a Centurion tank. "My father saw World War II ... so one of the other reasons I came out here was to honor him."

The event was designed to be equally entertaining and educational, while raising awareness of and funds for the Americans in Wartime Experience museum, which has begun construction off



Reenactors engaged with the crowd to talk about the history of the vehicles on display.



The Americans in Wartime Experience drew thousands of visitors to Nokesville last weekend for its annual Tank Farm open house.