Salute to veterans enjoyed by young and old



SPECIAL DAY: Veterans Michael Murry and Ken Wilkins enjoy the day

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By ALEX CLAYDON

Display at ex-US base

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A FLY-past by a Dakota brought back memories of when Wollaton Park was used as an American army base during the Second World War.

The air display was part of events which took place to celebrate Veterans' Day over the weekend.

Visitors came to see an exhibition of wartime memorabilia in Wollaton Hall. There was also a funfair and stalls hosted by charities and organisations.

Vicky Martin, one of the organisers, said: "The 508 Paratroopers who were based in the park were actually taken over to Normandy in a Dakota.

"In wartime the park was covered by hundreds of tents. This Veterans' Day event is a first for Nottingham, but will undoubtedly be the first of many."

Many of the visitors were veterans themselves and the event brought memories flooding back.

Korean veteran Ron Spencer, 76, of Arnold, who fought in the Royal Leicestershire Regiment, spotted a Bren machine gun, like the one he used in battle, at the exhibition.

Handling it, he said: "It is like second nature to me.

"We think it is important that this never happens to our country again and we are all for peace. But it is also important to keep the memories alive."

Veteran Michael Murry, 85, of Bestwood Park, who was in the 1st Battalion Sherwood Foresters, said: "I was captured in Tobruk and taken to a prisoner of war camp in Italy where I worked on the fields, before being taken to Poland where I worked in the coal mines.

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It is important that events like this are organised so the community does not forget the sacrifice everyone made."

The event also inspired younger visitors. Bethany Liddington, 13, of Long Eaton said: "I want to join the army because it looks exciting. I think it would enable me to do a lot of good and feel inspired by the veterans here today."

The guest of honour was Veterans' Minister, Derek Twigg, who presented veterans with badges on Saturday.

He said: "The reason why I have come to Nottingham is because the city came very close to winning the opportunity to host the national venue for Veterans' Day. So I had to come and see it."

Sir Andrew Buchanan The Lord Lieutenant of Notts said: "As someone who was a small boy during the war I remember with gratitude those who fought in the world wars."

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